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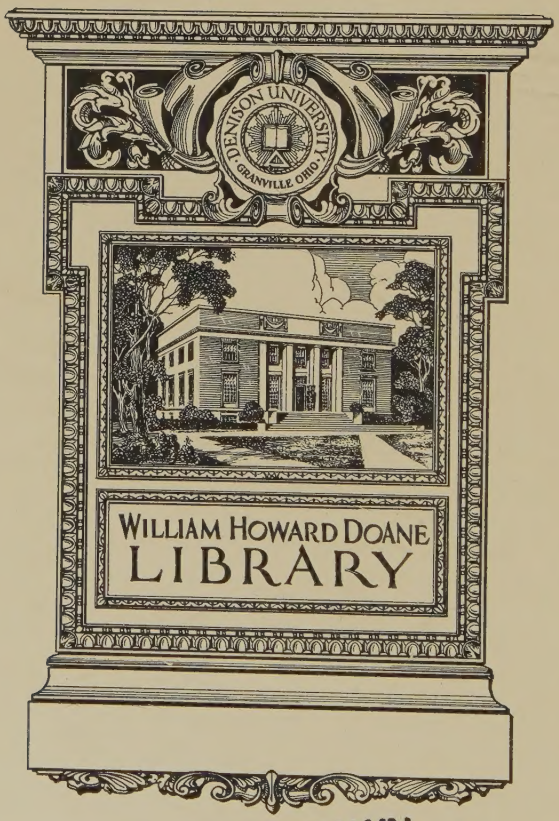
WITHDRAWN



WITHDRAWN

LXIII

THE PRINCE DE LIGNE

QUEEN ALEXANDRA

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THE PRINCE DE LIGNE.

Frontispiece.

THE PRINCE DE LIGNE

A GAY MARSHAL OF THE OLD REGIME · *By* O. P. GILBERT

Translated by JOSEPH McCABE

T. FISHER UNWIN LTD
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PREFATORY NOTE

M. GILBERT was engaged for five years in the writing of this little work. During that time he was more absorbed in the life of the Prince de Ligne than in the life of our own time, pregnant as it was with great events. As the basis of his work he took the account of the Prince and his family, written by M. Wauters, in the *Biographie Nationale Belge*. This, with the aid of the extensive writings of the Prince himself, he has expanded into the present work. To a very large extent he has allowed the Prince to tell his own story, in his own entertaining way; and the French editor of the work assures us that these lengthy and judiciously chosen extracts from the Prince's *Miscellanies*—a series of nearly forty volumes—were the pages in which M. Gilbert took the greatest pride and pleasure. He has, however, expended upon the work no less critical research than artistic care. The first chapter, a long and most erudite genealogy of the Ligne family, has not been included in the present version.

J. M.

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THE PRINCE DE LIGNE

INTRODUCTION

I HAD, in the early hours of the morning, passed through the gate of the gardens of Belœil, the château of the Prince de Ligne. The air was rich in errant vapours, which the sun lit with threads of light gold. Thousands of flowers, scattered over the borders and the beds, breathed a perfumed intoxication to the heavens.

I had long been familiar with the writings and deeds of the Field-Marshal Prince Charles Joseph de Ligne, but I was not a little moved to find myself, for the first time, in these gardens, which are still filled with the subtle sense of his presence. All the phrases I had read in the thirty or forty volumes of his *Miscellanies*, referring to this unique park, came to my memory; for, while the glory of Belœil belongs strictly to Claude Lamoral II, his father, it was the son who completed the work and described its superb harmony.

I walked for hours, experiencing a curious voluptuousness as I felt on my face the warm caress of the odours and luminous colours of the flowers. I had already passed along a

number of flower-bordered paths, by murmuring streams and silent canals, and my step was slowing down with fatigue when the palisades of the "Bassin des Dames" suddenly opened out before me.

Such peace reigned here that I could but stretch myself on the grass and let my thoughts float on the sweet stream of the hours. The water lay, translucid, on a bed of dead leaves and red bricks, which gave it the prettiest shade one can imagine.

I seemed to doze for some time when, suddenly, a quiet sound caused me to open my eyes. A man approached me: a man clothed in the costume of earlier days, his graceful figure surmounted by a countenance of rare charm. He had delicate lips, eyes that sparkled with refined goodness, a large forehead which passed, above, into a mass of belligerent and fantastic hair. Figure and face had a supple and youthful grace, although he must have been at least sixty years of age.

I sprang to my feet.

"Do not be disturbed, sir," he said. "You are an industrious scholar absorbed in a fastidious task. You are in the gardens of Belœil to take notes before you write a chapter of the work which you consecrate to me, with the title, 'The residence of the Princes de Ligne, park and château,' or some such captivating title. Yes,

I see. Do not be astonished. In the realm of the shades from which I come we keep closely in touch with earthly matters. From tediousness —merely because we are bored. Now I am going to help you."

The Prince looked round, and continued:

"Human nature is a strange thing. You will not have failed to read that my father and I were not always on good terms. We did not see eye to eye. I had to suffer a little from the harshness of his manner. Our contrasted characters ought to have found common ground in our common love of nature. . . . But, before I proceed, let me give you a few historical details. Your work will not be taken seriously unless it is rather dull.

"The château is, as you know (or you will find the point in the work of M. Leuridant, that devil of a fellow who knows more about me than I ever knew myself), mentioned for the first time about 1146. I should add that I have every reason to believe that then, and later, when my ancestor Jean de Ligne inherited it, by his marriage with Jeanne de Condé, it was a poor place. You know, further, that Jean II de Ligne—if it was not his nephew Antoine, who was known as the Big Devil—had it taken down and rebuilt in the woods. Decorated in the classical style, the main part of the building and the left wing were built by my grandmother,

Johanna Monique de Aragon y Beñavidez, wife of Louis Ernest, and his son, my uncle Henry Ernest. It was the latter who built the right wing, which you see from here—about 1699, it is said. As to my father, Claude Lamoral II, he put what we call those 'common' buildings in the courtyard. The château was burned down on December 14, 1900. Happily, I was then but a shade, or I would have shed all the tears there are on earth. It was intelligently reconstructed, and, as it is to-day, robust and massive, its four towers united by a classic façade, I find its lines very harmonious. It differs from the old only in the newness of the material.

"As you are of the military profession, I may add that in 1478 the château compelled a French detachment to respect it. It is even said that the seneschal, Montayle, who defended the little fortress in the absence of his master, Jean de Ligne, admitted the herald sent by the besiegers into the enclosure, and showed him the artillery, and that the man said: 'I should not have expected to find so powerful an organ in such a small chapel.'

"In 1793, a handful of Republican troops occupied the château; and Wellington made it his headquarters at the time of the downfall of Confusion I.

"I shall always be grateful to my father for bringing me up at Belœil. Here I learned to

love the trees and the flowers, and all that lends enchantment to our frail existence. Claude Lamoral II found a valuable assistant in the architect Jean Michel Chevolet. I may say in passing—though probably you already know it—that Le Nôtre had no share in the drafting of the plans. That distinguished gardener died in 1700, when my father was in his fifteenth year.

"I will not dwell on the unflattering opinion of certain audacious critics whose glasses seem to have needed cleaning. My father, Claude Lamoral II, designed this noble French garden. It covers two hundred acres. A sheet of water, which covers twenty acres, divides it into two equal parts, and these are surrounded by canals, several arms of which appear here and there in my forests, disguised as streams, and encircle a small portion that contains herds of deer, boars, and stags. There are, in fact, too many of these in my forests, which stretch five leagues, and are in places two leagues in width. At the end of this large sheet of water, beyond a swing bridge over one of the encircling canals, there is a cross-roads which gives its character to the forest. The main road is a hundred and twenty feet wide. But I need not speak of the roads and circles and vast and beautiful designs, or the superb clumps of oak and beech which lie some distance apart, so that the deer may be seen passing from one to the other.

"On the north-west side of the château Claude Lamoral laid out a bed in crinoline shape; but his best work, you will admit, is the 'Grande Vue.' Look at it from here, turning your back upon the south-western façade. Is it not a magnificent prospect? The great lake at our feet, stirring always with an imperceptible movement, seems to breathe like the living breast of a woman. The swans beyond, slow and stately, vanish and reappear in the silvery vapours which hang over the water, and all this is set in a stupendous frame of garden and forest.

"Now look at each side of the sheet of water. There are many basins; many lofty hedges, fresh and superb, neither tiring nor tired; many Italian arbours, magical arbours, and other noble bowers, a charming cloister round a sheet of water, salons carpeted with grass; baskets of flowers, a small forest of roses in clusters, and on every hand the most beautiful waters in the world, vivid, pure, limpid, all communicating with each other. All the paths are green, and all lead to the forest, which is part of my garden.

"My father, some time before his death, having drawn up, with the aid of the devoted Chevolet, the plans of the orangery, the cascade, the labyrinth, and a number of paths and alleys, set up the group of Neptune, Æolus, Aquilo, and the marine monsters at the head of the lake, facing

the main avenue—the alley which is generally called the 'Grande Vue.'

"When I became the owner of Belœil, I was satisfied with the harmony of the general proportions of the garden, and I was careful to make no alterations. I tried to do something of a different character. First I laid out the secondary court, taking down a number of outbuildings which I did not like, narrowing an immense moat, filling up part of a pond, and planting new trees, making new paths amongst the old, and adding a few other little irregularities without touching the general plan. My hundreds of workers soon proved that I was right. I was chiefly taken up with the ponds, canals, and streams. I already had the canal which encloses the French garden and the château, tracing a square frame round them. I created the Rieu d'Amour, that charming little stream which issues from three basins and, running by the side of a narrow path, keeps it company with its song.

"I soon had quite a large fleet on the canals and the great lakes. There were sailing yachts on the large lake, which is in communication with all the canals, pieces of water, and streams; and over these I threw bridges of all sorts. My galleys flew little banners, and they were manned by sailors wearing my livery.

"There are only two tastes, a good and a bad. There is only one music. I have long thought

it wrong to speak of things as 'French,' 'Italian,' and so on. I would rather say, simply, that a thing is good. I should like to say the same of gardens, but I believe there is some sort of convention. The English like simplicity, naturalness, and disorder: the French prefer straight lines, prospects, large pieces. Without attempting to decide which is the best music, and which are the most beautiful gardens, I feel that we must adapt ourselves to the situation: that Jupiter must not linger too long over a vowel, and Versailles ought not to be like Covent Garden. The glory of Belœil is due to my father. He made a sort of epic poem of it. All that is grand and noble and majestic about it is his. After his large ideas, it remained for me merely to conceive interesting and pleasant details. Moreover, great things nearly always bore one. I prefer a song of Anacreon's to the Iliad, and I would rather read the Chevalier de Boufflers than the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique*.

"I have more right than any to say that I do not attempt to decide between Kent, the English architect, and Le Nôtre. And, to prove that I am no partisan, though my heart leans to the irregular, I will admit that the strangers who come to Belœil are impressed by the French features, and find it difficult to leave off admiring the superb development of my father's work to go and dream in mine; because you cannot

compel anybody to think, and most people would rather look than feel.

"It was the crinoline-bed in the north-west which I attacked to make room for the English garden. But, as it was in a dreadful condition eleven months out of the twelve, it took all the zeal of my gardeners. They worked on a plan of soft earth and boughs which I drew up for them before I went off to the Turkish War in 1781. When I came back, I found this desolate part of my garden transformed into the sweetest of meadows, cut by flower-beds, and a stream flowing through one of the most pleasant of valleys. I added a little house, some ruins, and these baths, with several sets of marble steps, so that one need only dip as far as one likes; also the Temple of Morpheus, where one might rest on immense round couches, and the Island of Flora.

"If you follow this stream further, beyond the Isle of Roses, you find on the left bank an obelisk dedicated by friendship to valour, a monument to my son. It is not my fault that Charles distinguished himself in the war, and has this monument raised to him. It is not my fault that I gave life to so perfect a creature. The father disappears, the man remains; and the memory of the hero is celebrated. I must not, therefore, be accused of partiality; though I could understand a charge of pride. But my paternal pride was punished by his death.

Happily, all is effaced and forgotten above, and there remains for us only the veiled memory of the pain.

"Beyond the north-western canal are the kitchen garden and the hothouses; they cover twenty acres, and are surrounded by walls covered with beautiful fruit-trees: there are four basins, with jets of water. In the centre there is a Temple of Pomona, for eating fruit. The hothouses, and a melon garden and fig garden, are said to be very fine.

"As you walk about Belœil, you will see a hundred things—arbours, streams, statues, flowers, basins, forest—which I need not describe. Make yourself at home. Rest in the shade of the arbours, listen to the song of the streams, smile to the statues, give a loving regard to the flowers, lean over the basins, stroll through the forest. Love everything, as I loved it, and be happy. I am happy in so far as I succeeded in imparting a taste for nature by embellishing her a little; or, rather, by coming nearer to her, by making her perceptible. From our gardens she would lead us elsewhere. Our minds would seek refuge only in her power. Our hearts, the purer for her converse, would be the most precious temple that could be raised to her. Our souls would be lit up by her glory. Truth would return to dwell amongst us. Justice would descend from the heavens, and a hundred

times happier than they were in Olympus, the gods would entreat men to let them dwell amongst them." [1]

The voice had ceased, and I turned to look. But the place where the Prince had stood was now empty. There was no one. The sun pierced the branches in places, and gently tore the tender shade. A brook near by murmured an endless prayer. Birds flying high up in the sky made streaks upon the supple mirror of the basin.

I stood up to go. But, while I crossed the grass-carpeted salons, as I passed by the Large Pond, the Cloister, the Thickets, the Neptune Group, the Babbling Brook of Love, the Oval Basin, the Basin of the Gold Fish, the Rose Garden, the Green Basin, the Canals, I recalled the words of the apparition. They are even now in my memory. I have tried to reproduce them, though conscious that I am a poor scribe. If, however, my prose does not satisfy you, as it does not enchant me, go to Belœil, to think and dream and smile. Perhaps you will, like me, meet the shade of the great departed. Perhaps you will feel yourself taken by the hand and drawn into the adorable charm of the ancient park, and perhaps you will hear a gentle, melancholy voice welcome you to one of the most beautiful things in the world.

[1] The last paragraph, and many others of this imaginary address, are literal quotations from the Prince's writings.

The Prince de Ligne

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

It was at Brussels, on May 23, 1735, that the Princesse de Ligne, *née* Salm, gave birth to Field-Marshal Prince Charles Joseph de Ligne, with all the solemnity desirable in the case of so great a person.

The date has not remained undisputed, even by Charles Joseph himself. "The year of my birth seems to be uncertain," he says. "Baptized without any particular ceremony by the chaplain of my father's regiment, I lost a case which depended upon my baptismal certificate, the original of which could not be found." On December 27, 1772, the Prince's German secretary, Leygeb, writes from Brussels that the vicar of Sainte Gudule has given him a copy of the entry in the baptismal register. It is in Latin; it sets forth that the Prince was baptized in the paternal house, without imposition of name.

But this does not settle the difficulty, as the details given in Brussels are themselves disputed :

> The register of the vicar of Sainte Gudule is no more accurate than that kept at Belœil. The reason of this is that the children were usually baptized at home, and without the customary ceremony of naming them, which was reserved for a later date ; and this date never came, and no further notice was taken of it.

It appears from this letter—and this explains the words of the Prince's *Memoirs* : " Baptized without ceremony by a chaplain of my father's regiment "—that the Ligne family were in the habit of having a few prayers hurriedly said on the day of the birth of a child by the first priest who was available, and relegated to some indefinite period the more solemn ceremony of baptism in the church. And as at this time the *curé* kept the register of births, and did not enter the name and title of the infant until the day when he applied the sacred oil to it, the error is easily explained. In any case, there is only question of an error of a few days, or of weeks at the outside. We may, at least, confidently conclude that the Prince de Ligne was born in 1735.

The Princess, his mother, died on December 27, 1739. From that time onward Charles Joseph experienced not even the most elementary tenderness, and had to face the hard authority of his father. Madame de Ligne, in fact, weak, sickly,

and always trembling before her husband, as she was, could merely have softened the blows a little, not averted them.

Claude Lamoral II, the father, was a distinguished soldier, and had married Elizabeth Alexandrine Wild et Rheingrafin, daughter of the Prince de Salm. They had two daughters, who became nuns—"ugly but virtuous," their brother says—as well as the Prince. Claude Lamoral was anything but sentimental. He had no tenderness either for himself or others; but he did recommend honour and probity to his son, who says of him:

> He was very superior, and as proud internally as he was externally. He thought himself a Louis XIV; and he almost was, in his gardens and magnificence, though at times he stooped to almost comic acts of meanness. He spent millions on Belœil, where he sometimes gave superb festivals and kept up royal state; but he grumbled when his servants gave a glass of wine to some priest or monk who came to preach the Lenten sermons. 'Beer is good enough for those people,' he used to say. It was eccentricity, for there was real nobility in his ways and his actions.

For his son he had a strange dislike. The Prince says:

> My father did not love me. I do not know why, for we did not know each other. It was not the fashion at that time to be a good father or good husband. . . . I often received marks of attention from him in the shape of insults and prophecies that I would turn out

a scoundrel. He used to say, pleasantly, to my sister: 'My son will be killed in war, as you have the look of an heiress.'

We are quite sure of the authenticity of the *Memoirs* and of the sincerity of their author. Indeed, we have already seen something of the haughty and brutal character of Claude Lamoral II; and the following lines from the *Journal of the Marshal de Croy*, published by the Count de Ganay, afford indisputable evidence of it:

November 14, 1754. To-day I have been a witness of the frightful harshness of the Prince de Ligne toward his son, and I had a curiously enlightening conversation with the tutor, M. de la Parte. It appears that the Prince de Ligne detests his children; and he deserves to be detested by them. As to his son . . . who was a fine youth of about twenty, I thought I could see that the reason was that he detested seeing his heir; that he wanted to do everything himself and leave nothing to others. Although he was over seventy, he would never leave off, or believe in anything to come after him. His son, who felt the harshness of his situation acutely, was full of spirit, of self-esteem, ambition, and glory. He wanted to do heroic things, and he might turn out a great man or a very bad one, according as he consulted his conceit or his imagination.

Adding to these charming qualities an avarice which might on occasion, as we said, become a great prodigality, Claude Lamoral taught his son, from an early date, the severe maxims of the wisest economy.

We will return later to this point. For the moment let it be understood that this fabulously rich lord compelled the youthful Charles to buy his own powder, so that he would not waste it when he was hunting. In return he paid him "four sous for each piece of small game, a crown for a fox or a deer, a large crown for a boar or a wolf." The whole of this pretty arithmetic was thrown away. Charles Joseph hastened to bury it in the darkest corner of his barn as soon as he became master of his own fortune.

Descendant of a race in which (even for the bastards) bravery was hereditary, Ligne, scarcely ten years old, eagerly followed the battle of Fontenoy (May 11, 1745), which took place twelve miles from Belœil. The French Army, led by Marshal de Saxe, had encountered the Anglo-Dutch forces, under the command of Cumberland, between the Bary Forest and the Scheldt. The conflict began at four in the morning. The Marshal's troops rested upon Antoing (right), Fontenoy (centre), and the redoubts they had made on the right flank and the Forest of Bary. The enemy was based upon Vezon. The issue remained in suspense from eight in the morning until two in the afternoon, the Marshal contenting himself with checking the march of the enemy upon Fontenoy, his main position. Then, suddenly, he himself rallied his infantry, and, bearing down on the right flank of the enemy—

while the King's bodyguard, the gendarmerie, and the carabineers, under the lead of the Duc de Richelieu, pressed upon the centre—he won the victory. The English and Hanoverians retired precipitately. The French left 3,000 dead and 3,600 wounded of their 40,000 men: the enemy 7,000 killed and 2,500 prisoners out of 53,000 men. Ostend, Nieuport, Dendermond, Audenaerd, Bruges, and Ghent fell into the hands of the French.

In the same year (1745), from the same windows of the château of Belœil, Ligne professes that he followed the sieges of Tournai, Ath, and Mons. It is possible as regards Ath, but in regard to the other towns we prefer to think that he is speaking figuratively, or that he has added somewhat to the range of his eyesight; unless the simpler explanation is that his father or one of his teachers took him to see the war, as patriotic citizens take their children to-day to see the military demonstration on July 14th.

This year, so fertile in warlike visions, was bound to put a match to the powder. Charles Joseph found his vocation, or one of his vocations, for the gods know how many others he had. Prince Henry Ernest, his uncle, contributed not a little to feed his passion for war. Aflame with heroism, the young man devoured his Quintus Curtius. Charles XII and Condé kept him from sleeping at nights. He went into

ecstasies over Polybius, wrote comments on the Commentaries of Folard, and at the age of fifteen entered into a lengthy correspondence with an officer of the French regiment called "Le Royal Vaisseau." He even tried, fruitlessly, to enlist. At length, in 1752, at the age of seventeen, he wrote his *Discourse on the Profession of Arms*, which he would one day publish, and he became an ensign in his father's regiment.

Some day, no doubt, a book will be written about the Prince's tutors; and it will certainly be amusing, to judge from certain pages of his *Memoirs*. Harassed between an austere father and a prodigal son, the one all strictness and the other all imagination, these poor folk, who had to teach Latin to the most insubordinate of pupils, often ended by forgetting what they knew. At the most, the education was variegated and lively, and a number of professors broke their authority, like so many dry sticks, on the young man's impetuosity. They succeeded each other with the rapidity of a cinema:

> The *Abbé* Verdier was replaced by another *Abbé*, the only teacher I ever had who believed in God. He was a real country *curé*. He read his breviary, sketched, and shot quails, making me carry his powder and shot and collect his game. I disputed it with his little spaniel; which made me active, and I grew up. But it was realized that my *Abbé* taught me nothing beyond retrieving, and he was sent home.

The sportsman was succeeded by a man of letters, a certain M. Dutertre, who wanted to "make literary men in the village, where he found several shepherdesses to his taste." This did not satisfy Claude Lamoral II. He summoned a military man, "the Chevalier des Essarts, a very limited gentleman, a brave officer who had returned from the war in Bohemia and Bavaria, of which he was always telling." He undertook to impart an education, "which was what he lacked himself."

Charles Joseph was soon tired of the "limited gentleman," as he called him, and the affair nearly had a tragic ending. The Chevalier had only one book, *The Fables of Phœdrus.* He gave this to his pupil to learn by heart, while he went out riding. Naturally, as soon as the horse's tail had disappeared round the bend of the road, Ligne threw aside the book, pleading a complete failure of memory when the lesson-hour arrived. The professor did not admit the excuse long. He wanted to flog his pupil, but Ligne rushed at him, and then ran for his sword. They separated the combatants just in time, and Ligne was again without a mentor. He continues:

> The Jesuits and the cavalry having done so little to meet my father's wish to make a little prodigy of me, he turned to an entirely different party. A successor of Arnaud and Pascal, as enlightened, enthusi-

astic, eloquent, and sublime as the best of Port Royal, was chosen to put the finishing touch to my education —the 'finishing touch,' they said, but how many more there were to be afterwards! His name was M. Renault de la Roche-Valain. He was a great disputant and profound theologian. He called the village preacher 'a crow cawing in the church of God.' The latter had, however, a good deal of credit in the mind of my uncle, a small and very narrow-minded Marshal, and the tutor was accused of Jansenism. I can still see the two donkeys, laden with Saint Augustine, some other Fathers of the Church, and the Bible, arriving one day with the head of the convent to put my teacher to rout. He was right; but it would not have mattered if he was wrong. The monkish cabal deprived me of a man who was full of light. I had been a Molinist without knowing it under my two Jesuits, who had talked to me about Mme. Guyon, Fénélon, and Quietism. I had become a Jansenist under my co-Oratorian, who spoke to me of nothing but Bossuet, and gave me to read the Catechism of Montpellier, the Old Testament, and Mézanguy's *Histoire des Variations*, etc. The former had taught me all about Molina and Molinos. The *Abbé* I spoke of—the only one who believed in God—had given me Maria d'Agreda and Marie Alacoque to read; and, with all my ecclesiastical erudition, I did not know a word about religion. This was discovered, as I was fourteen years old, and there was question of my making my first communion. I was to learn everything, from the creation to the mysteries, from the village priest. He told me that he knew no more about them than I did. I believed in Christianity, about which no one had spoken to me, and I was devout for a fortnight.

A new military tutor was then summoned, the Chevalier de St. Maurice, captain of hussars;

possibly well-informed, but believing neither in God nor the devil, and the Prince was in a fair way to become an atheist.

At length a M. de la Parte, an ex-Jesuit of the College of Louis le Grand, not deterred by the disastrous experiences of his predecessors, took the young man in hand. This time the effort was successful, and Ligne preserved all his life the vibrant memory of his old master:

> From the College of Louis le Grand came the full bloom of the humanism of letters and of urbanity, which is the charm of my life. In forming my mind he acquired the greater title to my gratitude as I believe that, if I am worth anything at all, it is to him that I am indebted for it.[1]

Ligne did more than express his gratitude in warm and flattering terms. The day after his marriage he discharged the first debt of his life: "1,200 ducats to offer M. de la Parte an estate in the Agénois, his province."

Not a little turbulent, as we have already seen, Ligne seems to have felt aggrieved at an early age because he was not treated as a man:

> My father, who shared his box with the Princess de Horne, who had recently been married, and was as

[1] This M. de la Parte, who had a considerable influence on the Prince, seems to have written a curious work, the *Épitre à S. A. Mgr. le Prince de Ligne*, in connection with a case which had summoned him to Paris, of which he got the Prince to make a copy. It is not without originality. It is found in the *Lettres et billets inédits du Prince de Ligne.*

beautiful as she was amiable, feared that I might fall in love with her. He would not let me go to the box. My tutor liked the theatre. 'Very well,' my father said to him, 'you can go on the benches.' There were then benches in all parts. I saw charming actresses at close quarters, and I lost nothing that could be at all instructive in the gay vaudeville-operas. . . .

One evening I pretend that I must go out for a moment. I remain in the wings, where I find a dancer, named Grégoire, whose pretty eyes I thought—for I was already a fool—turned in my direction occasionally. I made my declaration to her, and she burst out laughing. Intimidated at first, then thrown into confusion, I said to myself: 'This scene in the wings will have to do something for me.' The duel of M. de Turenne at the age of nine had gone to my head. 'I am thirteen,' I said, 'yet I have not yet fought a duel.' An officer of at least thirty years is coming into the theatre, to sit on one of the benches, and I tread on his foot. 'Bother! You are very clumsy, Prince,' he says to me. 'No, sir,' I replied, 'I did it on purpose. You looked at me in a peculiar way.' . . . He, like Mlle. Grégoire, burst out laughing. Twice in a single quarter of an hour I had been treated as a child.

His childish ambition was to find its first satisfaction at Vienna. Claude Lamoral took him to the Court, and, while the father had his presence announced to the Empress, the Emperor took Charles Joseph to his own rooms. He had scarcely got back when his father returned, and scolded him for daring to enter an apartment reserved for chamberlains. "That is precisely what he is," said Francis I; "I wanted to surprise you." The young dignitary was overjoyed.

Chamberlain in his sixteenth year! In future when he writes letters, he does not fail to sign them: Charles de Ligne, Chamberlain.

It is true that, when they got back to Belœil, the Chamberlain had occasion to make a few wise reflections on the vanity of human affairs. Our hero's father knew very well how to damp, on every occasion, the juvenile impetuosity of his son. When the latter was raised by the Austrian Empress to the rank of colonel of the "Ligne Dragoons," he received this affectionate congratulation: "It was bad enough, sir, that I should have you for a son, without having you for my colonel in addition." The Prince says:

> In 1755 my father, who never spoke to me, put me in a carriage, took me to Vienna, and married me. I came to a house where there were a lot of pretty women, married or to be married, I did not know which. I was told to take a seat at table by the side of the youngest of them. I learned from my people that there was question of arranging a marriage for me. But, when, on leaving the table, I reflected on all I had seen, I did not know whether it was my mother-in-law, an aunt, or the pretty young woman who was destined for me. I was married a week later. I was eighteen years old, and my little wife fifteen. We had never spoken a word to each other. That was how I performed what is said to be the most serious act of life. I thought for several weeks that it was absurd, and then became indifferent to it.

Françoise Marie Xavière, Princess of Lichtenstein, was born on November 25, 1740, of

Emmanuel and Marie Antoinette de Dietrichstein-Weihselstadt. She was, therefore, still not quite fifteen when, on March 25, 1755, she was married to Charles Joseph de Ligne. The young husband himself was (contrary to his statement in his *Memoirs*) twenty years old. The Duc de Croy writes in his *Journal* that Marie Xavière "was rather good-looking and seemed to be a snake in the grass." The prediction does not seem to have been realized. The Princess was a good mother and good housekeeper; and, while her husband went about the world, she carefully maintained the good order of his establishment, controlling the accounts of the agents, which were always in disorder. Years later, her husband does her this justice:

> My wife is an excellent woman, full of delicacy, sensibility, and nobleness. She is not in the least personal. A touch of temper quickly passes away, melting into the tears which rise to her eyes over every trifle. She has no trouble, for she has an excellent heart. She gives her children all they ask, and she is also complaisant in regard to me.

Ligne has every reason to praise the complaisance of his wife. The young Princess, a very sensible and decent little woman, found it necessary to be complaisant, not to say indulgent. Her lord and master was not guilty of any great and lasting disloyalty to her, but he made up for this by a thousand small ones which, added

together, really made a big one—though not so dangerous. He had, in fact, too much imagination to be romantic: too much spirit and restlessness to lose himself long in the arms of a mistress. In one place he says in his works, with a sort of fury:

It is precisely because I love decency that I detest what generally goes by that name. This is how it is done. A young girl is taught that she must never look a man in the face, never reply to him, never ask how she came into the world. Then there appear on the scene two black men and one covered with finery. They say to her: 'You will pass the night with this gentleman.' The gentleman, all aflame, brutally demands his rights. He asks nothing, but exacts much. She rises in tears, at least. They are both in a bad temper and ready to quarrel. Thus marriage always begins under happy auspices. All decency has already gone. Can decency now prevent this pretty woman from granting freely to the man who loves her what she has granted to the man who does not? It is the profanation, by parents and lawyers, of the most sacred engagement of hearts.

If not his own, it is, perhaps, the story of his wife that Ligne tells us. In any case, he confines himself to

being loved from time to time by a pretty woman who loves others also: being taken up, dropped, and taken up again, in full consciousness. It is a very happy condition. It is a benefice with the charge of souls.

For the moment, however, there is no question

of deception. The church still echoes with the strains of the wedding march, and Ligne is content to astonish his wife considerably by a few little eccentricities, reserving the better ones in order to relieve the tedium of marriage at a later date. His father, suddenly turning to prodigality—but that will not last—lends his assistance:

> At the marriage ceremony, conducted by a village priest of Austria or Moravia, the litanies were said. It was the custom to come in one's bedchamber-robe, and mine was, in the middle of summer, of flame-coloured satin, with gold-embroidered parrots perched on a number of green-embroidered trees. What was my astonishment when my father, with an air of satisfaction and of pleasure at the surprise, made me put my arms into this ancient robe, in which I had seen him during fifty attacks of gout. My father, on the other hand, had the look of being the bridegroom. He wore clothes completely covered with gold embroidery. He had, to say the truth, made me discharge a shower of silver over the betrothal, and a shower of gold over the marriage.

On the morning after the marriage Ligne, either "from pose or from taste for hunting," got up at six o'clock. In opening the door he fell upon his mother-in-law, who had come to awaken him and his wife, lest evil spirits should cast a spell upon them.

A little later in the year the Princess of Saxe-Weissenfels, Françoise Marie Xavière's aunt, is infected with affection for Charles Joseph,

and goes so far as to say that she will pay all his expenses while he is at Dresden. Ligne does not wait to hear more. He runs to the Hôtel de Pologne, and orders dinner and supper. He invites "the whole of Saxony and of Poland." He admits, with an air of carelessness: "I cost the dear Princess a good deal, and I leave her charmed with a young couple with thirty-two years between them."

CHAPTER II

CHARACTER OF THE PRINCE

IT MAY be said that this little work is devoid of plan, but it seems to me essential, to ensure the reader's interest in our hero, to sketch his character at once. I know that this has already been partly learned from the preceding chapter. Up to the present, however, the brilliant qualities and charming defects of the Prince have appeared rather disjointedly. Twenty years, marriage, and war are now going to bring them together, so as to form a whole, his character. Is it a heresy to believe that at the age of twenty Ligne is already what he will be in mature age? Has he not himself written, on the threshold of old age: "My poor head is worn out, but my heart is not"? I imagine him as capable of saying, like a certain character in a comedy, well over fifty, whose age had been asked by a commissary of police:

"Twenty."

"You mean, you have been twenty."

"That is precisely why I keep twenty."

Mme. de Staël writes: "Marshal the Prince de Ligne has been recognized everywhere in France as one of the most amiable men in the country, and it is rare for them to grant this honour to one who was not born in France. Possibly the Prince de Ligne is the only foreigner who became a model, instead of an imitator, of the French spirit."

It seems to me that one could not define Ligne better than as an "amiable man." Who could find a better label than "amiable" for his writings? Charles Joseph de Ligne looked upon life as a joyous masquerade. He rarely goes below the surface. He never grants more than a relative importance to himself or others; though it is a little less relative in his own case:

I am very much like everybody else; better than some think, less good than others think. Content with myself in big things, where I defy anybody to prove me wrong, I have, perhaps, too much neglected the judgment of some people in smaller matters. But I always said to myself: 'Is one's reputation to depend upon so many people who have none?'

I pity or I blame those who judge me wrongly. I laugh when I see that I am not understood in certain essential parts of my character. What else can I do, when those I love reproach me with having no sentiment, and those whom I take some trouble to oblige accuse me of levity? Nevertheless I am from time to time paid with ingratitude. I do not know if I do any good, but at least I do not do, or say, or think,

evil. . . . I forgive, or at least I forget; and, if friends are rare, I let quantity make up for quality. I see everything either as good or bad. If any good fortune befalls me, I enjoy it in advance, and I enjoy it still. If I experienced any little misfortune, I would say that I was expecting something worse, or that it could not last. I would hope for a change; and hope is a good thing.

We see that there is no darkness in his mind. He wants to please, to be loved.

In the long series of thirty-four volumes in which he discusses, indifferently, kings and servant girls, the theatre and the garden, the costume of the infantryman and of Julius Cæsar, the Capuchins and Voltaire, there are jewels at every step. Written with the ease of a fine style, the work of the Prince de Ligne enchants and disconcerts us by the impertinent sagacity of his criticisms and by the whirlpool of his spirit. It is interesting from both the literary and the historical point of view, admitting that "historical" is a big word. Obviously Ligne rather tells stories about history than writes history; but he gives us a loyal, and remarkably vivid, psychology of the great personages who were friends of his. He knew Catherine II, Marie Antoinette, the wife of the Marshal de Luxembourg, Mme. du Deffand, the wife of the Marshal de Mirepoix, the Countess de Boufflers, Frederick II, Joseph II, Louis XV, Louis XVI, the Count and the Viscount de Ségur,

the Chevalier de Boufflers, the Duc d'Orléans, Voltaire, Rousseau, Casanova, and great numbers of others. He had a quiet audacity in conversation which made people seek him. Catherine II once said: "If I had been a man, I should have been killed before I could become a captain." "I do not believe it, madam," he replied, "because I am still alive."

He was a faithful friend. He speaks of Marie Antoinette with rare felicitousness, with an exquisite and respectful tenderness. On the other hand, he detested all that was not Conservative (in the actual sense of the word) in political respects. Haughty noble, as he was, Ligne was violent, often with spirit, sometimes with no spirit at all, against the revolutionaries, and particularly against a special class—the revolutionaries of the study, the street, and the tavern:

> What are now called men of letters, being angry that men of the world are as competent as they are, show a good deal of bad temper. They are displeased because they are not consulted by kings and ministers. Someone ought to give them a bone to gnaw. It was clear that those who had more ability would chastise those who had less. It was clear that those who are nobody would like to be somebody; that they would say that nobility ought not to be hereditary, and would speak in the name of the people, who, if they left it alone, would go to the tavern, sing, and not want to kill or rule anybody.
>
> I have often seen these gentlemen who work for the

good of mankind in general decline to help a particular man. They remind me of the Englishman who, after spending a night working for the good treatment and emancipation of slaves, pulled the ears of his own slave every morning for rising late. (To ridicule the first bourgeois author who writes against the nobility, he ought to be made a baron. He would take the bait at once. The man of spirit would become the proudest of barons.)

A day will come when Ligne will be asked by the patriots of Brabant to take the lead in their insurrectionary movement. He will refuse with the best grace in the world, on the ground that "he never rebels in winter." We shall see later that witticisms of this sort brought him many enemies. We found at Brussels an anonymous little revolutionary document in which there is mention of "the infamous" Prince de Ligne; for revolutionaries are, like all fairly sincere people, sincerely boring, and we can understand that Ligne would detest their irritating austerity, and especially their lack of humour. It is precisely on account of his wit and sparkle that Ligne deserves to be regarded as a French writer. He writes: "I have six or seven countries—the Empire, Flanders, France, Austria, Poland, Russia, and, in a sense, Hungary; for it is necessary to grant indigenous rights to those who fight against the Turks." He is even "as Turkish as possible both in war and in love." He is essentially French; we may say

that freely, as we cannot be accused of nationalism. But it is a happy period for France, the time of universal France. No smoky internationalism, but the universality of intelligence, grace, spirit.

Ligne is a living symbol of it. He carries the elegant cut of his coat (for which, possibly, the tailor has not yet been paid) from kingdom to empire, from empire to kingdom. A breath of fresh air seems to come in with him. Whether he is twenty, forty, or fifty years old, he is equally well received. "It was always the fashion to treat me well," he says. He talks to Voltaire about the English, to Catherine II about music, to the Marquise de Coigny about a remarkable voyage. He is never anywhere, but always everywhere. When they look for him at Vienna, he is sure to be at Paris. When he is announced at Belœil, he is sure to be at Brussels, Berlin, or Moscow; and always "just going," at his ease in all circumstances, having the finest qualities in his heart. In the full sense of the word he deserves Mme. de Staël's epithet, "amiable man."

His mind is certainly not what gives him most trouble. It is a pretty girl, graceful, supple, undulating, of the finest quality that one can demand, ready to serve its lord and master on every occasion that offers; and he in turn is very complaisant. Rarely wicked, it is never

insidious or cowardly. When it attacks, the attack is frontal. It succeeds better without than with preparation. When it tries to be profound, it becomes clumsy. It judges acutely, it is true, but has not the inspiration to be amusing for a long time. It takes a precise view of the Revolution and of Napoleon I—but the jokes become tiresome. Above all things, it is a patched and powdered marchioness, with flying skirts. None can surpass it in the grace with which, with a single movement of the fan, it shoots out quips and smart sayings. "I give my mind a light nourishment," he says; "not too strong, as the mind is as susceptible as the stomach to indigestion. Philosophy, letters, verse —that is all I want."

Ligne lets himself be guided by his instinct rather than his reason. He judges by appearances: which is, in fact—whatever the wisdom of the nations may say—the best way to judge. "What seems the most frivolous is often the most essential." That is why there is, as we said, only one thing that chills our hero—the sight of bores. When he cannot avoid them, he "thinks of other things without their knowing it."

Soon there will be no more nations, not even sexes. Society is becoming more and more monotonous. If one did not still find in it from time to time a fool who draws another through a window to talk to him, or

to set chattering the *laudatores temporis acti*, who no longer remember the days when they were bored and are good enough to regret it, we should die of weariness. I repeat, society and all the different countries resemble each other more every day. People say and think too much alike. They are neither well nor ill. Every man and woman, for instance, writes his or her morning letter very well. For my part, I prefer the days when women made mistakes in spelling.

This is the cast of mind of a man of letters. I do not say an artist, because, while Ligne understands a good many things, he has not the admiration, the simple and rather naïve faith, of an æsthete. He evidently learned a great many things, but he has mainly adapted the thought of others to his own. It is not a question of plagiarizing, because, while he says nothing very personal, he has done something that is really his own.

In Ligne's ideas—his written ideas (drama, criticism, history, verse, and prose)—there is a medley of all doctrines, and from each he detaches the most attractive and most agreeable side. Rousseau, Voltaire, Frederick II, Casanova, Dante, Æschylus, Empedocles, Prince Eugene, Molière, La Fontaine, Homer, Pythagoras, M. de la Harpe, Cæsar, Polybius, Gustavus Adolphus, etc., met in his pages. This is not a criticism. Life is already so often a bore that everything should be forgiven to men of goodwill, and even others, except lack of wit. Of this maxim, which

Ligne has no doubt formulated somewhere, his life was one long application.

Let us next examine another side of the psychology (as people say nowadays) of Charles Joseph de Ligne—his recklessness:

I have been so indiscreet, so imprudent, so foolish sometimes, when I was young, and even to the present time—I so much liked to set people laughing, without being malicious or dangerous—that I do not understand how it is I have not had a score of duels. I have been very near one at least that number of times, but it was always with men who evaded by excusing themselves to me, or saying what is generally said when one does not want to fight: 'You did not expressly wish to offend me, did you?'

Once only I provoked Jean Palfy, to revenge myself for an insult he had circulated in regard to me. He was a general, and I was then only a colonel. This Jean Palfy had the look of a great noble. He was handsome and brave. . . . Joseph Colleredo, who was present, much concerned at seeing me enter upon an adventure that might have serious consequences, wrote to Marshal de Lacy: 'I have the honour of informing Your Excellency that Ligne's thoughtlessness has just brought *him* an affair.' The Marshal understood this to refer to himself, and he passed a very bad night, thinking that I had done something injurious to him, out of thoughtlessness, in his social world. He asked Colleredo to come and tell him what was the matter. He was reassured as far as regarded himself, and he wished to have the same assurance in regard to me. He therefore went to Palfy's house, to see if he could not find some means of checking his anger. He would have succeeded, perhaps, but I was there first, with my second, the Prince of Nassau-Usingen. I believe

that M. de Lacy was there by chance. I waited, and found my man booted and spurred, and wearing gloves, like Crispin. 'The devil,' I said to myself, 'is he so sure of finishing me, and has he got a horse ready for riding away on?' After a moment's silence M. de Lacy said to him: 'Well, M. Count, if that is your last word, I will bolt the door. Begin.' I looked at him, astonished to see a witness of his quality—he was already Feldzugmeister—risking his position at the Court if the affair went on. I laughed, and drew my sword. I broke M. Palfy's sword into I don't know how many pieces, for I lunged like the devil, and I kept him close up to the wall. He parried, however, and thrust occasionally, which made me so angry—I was afraid of having my face marked—that I did not see that he was disarmed and slightly scratched. I would have pinned him against his wall, but the Marshal struck down my sword. 'I will get another and begin again,' said Palfy. 'And I will use mine to prevent you,' said the Marshal. 'Come, sir, let us be off.' I refused, and the Marshal was very nearly turning combatant instead of second. But, seeing that I demanded my right to continue, he let us finish.

This recklessness was, naturally, noted with the Marshal's habitual grace. We shall see later that he took part in battles with the same debonair spontaneity. Here we will content ourselves with telling a few of his thousand and one sentimental follies, which will be sure to divert the reader. At Augsburg he went into a low tavern with two of Joseph II's colonels, Scharleman and Clerfayt. The three gentlemen were soon accosted by a recruiting sergeant, who

gave fifty ducats to Ligne and enlisted him. Another time, at Liège, he pretended that he was a cardinal, "sent by the Pope to admonish the Prince-Bishop for the irregularity of his morals." The Bishop thought he would die of fear. "Clearly, he had something heavy on his conscience." There was a good deal of talk in Liège and in the gazettes, and a complaint against our hero was sent to Charles of Lorraine.

Angry because I did not receive a regiment when my father died, I wrote to M. de Nenny, whom the Empress jocularly called my minister at her Court: 'Born in a country where there are no slaves, I will take my slender merits and my fortune elsewhere.' She read the letter, and, furious with the phrase, she summoned her son, Marshal Lacy, Prince Venzl Lichtenstein, and my uncle, to hold a council of war about me. The Emperor [the Archduke], a harder man then than he was afterwards, hardening himself systematically, proposed to dismiss me instead of being dismissed by me. 'For,' he said, 'it is me who would be dismissed, if we take him seriously. Let us take the initiative and get rid of him.' My uncle, anxious to play the Roman at my expense, proposed to imprison me in a fortress, to teach me not to bargain with my sovereign. 'And you, Marshal?' the Empress asked. 'I would be more severe than the Emperor and the Prince,' he replied. 'Neither of the chastisements they suggest is stern enough for the crime. Ligne is coming. Your Majesty must look away when he kisses your hand, and not speak a word to him during the three months he expects to spend in Vienna.' She did this, and with such affectation that once I thought I saw her on the point of laughing herself.

He follows up a certain Mme. de Pulli at a masked ball, and gets an assignation. Off he goes to it, to find, when the mask is taken off, a dark, starched figure—his conquest. He draws back, makes excuses, declares himself the greatest of criminals, and begs the lady to pardon his fervour at the ball. On another occasion he throws himself into an inextricable adventure at Prague: masked ball, filed bars, flying horses, and even several days spent in a convent, disguised as a woman.

The Prince often disguised himself as a woman, either on the stage or to make a fool of his contemporaries. Francis I dressed him as a lady of the Court, and pretended to a suitor that this was the lady he had chosen.

I committed a thousand follies. I embraced everybody. He wanted to carry me off, and, as he was grand master of the kitchen, he marched at the head of fifty cooks who played, like a band, on their saucepans, and took in flank the troop that surrounded me on the road to Etzeldorff, where we were going to sup. The chief steward, who had a reserve force of fifty ostlers, fell upon the kitchen with whips. I was defended, and the affair ended, after a show of fighting, with the substitution of his real fiancée, who came very properly with the chief Dame of the Court to ask what it was all about and scold her lover for thinking she could be such a scurvy person as I.

Disguise was very common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and was very different

from in the preceding centuries. There was no longer question of the freaks of Henry III and his favourites. It was now, during the reigns of Louis XIV, Louis XV and Louis XVI, chiefly a means of seduction, while still serving the purpose of debauch (of a natural order). Certain very handsome men have "the obsession to be thought beautiful." We remember the life of the Abbé de Choisy, who dressed as a girl until he was thirty years old, became an *Abbé* while he still wore petticoats, and was brought up in intimacy with the brother of Louis XIV, whose effeminate tastes were flattered by order of Mazarin. "The King's only brother," says Mme. de Lafayette, "was not less attached to his mother, the Queen. His inclinations were as much in harmony with the occupations of women as those of the king were opposed to them. He was handsome, and well set up, but had a beauty more suitable to a Princess than a Prince." Choisy writes in his *Memoirs*: "They dressed me as a girl whenever Monsieur came to the house, as he did at least two or three times a week. As soon as he arrived, followed by Cardinal Mazarin's nieces and some of the Queen's daughters, his toilet was performed and his hair dressed. He wore corsets to give him a slender waist. His tunic was taken off, and he was clothed in skirts and mantle." Mme. de Choisy had her son clad in this way until he was eighteen,

and he could then not get out of the habit. When he became a priest, he went so far as to beg, in the church of St. Médart, in a dressing-gown of white Chinese damask, edged with black stuff, "with a knot of black ribbon, ribbons on his sleeves, and a large bunch of black ribbon behind to mark his waist. A skirt of black velvet, two petticoats, a very elaborate head-dress, a little hat of black taffetas, trimmed with ribbon, fastened to a thickly powdered wig." Songs were sung about him and his "lovers" in the street. Benserade, in his *Nouveau Siècle de Louis XIV*, puts into the mouth of the king's brother, dressed as a woman at a ball, a song which ends, "From the habit of attaching myself to the fair sex, dressing as they dress, I at last became a girl."

These masters of the art of disguise were succeeded by a constellation of lesser stars—Caumartin, the future Bishop of Blois, the Abbé de Vaudrun, etc. Saint-Simon tells us of the Abbé d'Entraigues, "who kept the whiteness of his complexion by being bled frequently, and slept with his arms suspended in order to preserve the beauty of his hands, received visitors while he lay abed, clad like a lady, in night attire, with a beribboned lace cap, a bunch of ribbon at his breast, and a flounced night-dress and patches." On another occasion it is a certain Mlle. Saint-Ange who is taken to the convent of

the Abbaye au Bois, and whose mother comes to explain, three months later, that he is a boy. The Chevalier d'Eon, who was a reader at the Court of Catherine II of Russia, fought as an officer, and was condemned, in his forty-fourth year, by Louis XV—the sentence was confirmed by Louis XVI—to wear women's garments for the rest of his life. He poured out imprecations against the sentence, but, when the French Revolution set him free, he would not abandon the costume, which he called his "Nessus tunic."

Richelieu, making his court to Anne of Austria, dressed as a harlequin. Buckingham used all sorts of costumes to approach Anne safely. A young page of Mademoiselle was regarded by all as a very nice child, but in the end an unfortunate accident disclosed her real sex. The Count de Guiche had himself carried, dressed in the costume of a lady of the Court, in a chair to the house of Mme. d'Olonne. Even the women were not free from the mania. Mlle. d'Aubigny, born about 1670, entered the Opera as a singer, and had a brilliant success. She fought a duel between the acts. In the end she exchanged her skirt for a doublet, got herself dreaded as a most desperate brawler, carried off a young girl from a convent (after setting fire to the convent), and died, it is said, in the most austere repentance. Mlle. de Lancé, who dressed

her mother as a cavalier, went through the form of legal marriage with her. She, of course, made her supposed husband resume her skirts on the evening of the wedding-day, and, thanks to the title of Mme. la Marquise, to which she now had a right—after giving out that her husband was dead—she had a fine time. Queen Christina of Sweden dressed as a man when she lived at Paris, and, as Bussy-Rabutin says in his secret *Memoirs*: "One could have overlooked her tunic, wig, befeathered hat, kerchief round the neck, and scarf worn in Spanish style, if some change of fashion had made caps and skirts the costume of a cavalier." Literature abounds in instances of this kind of disguise.[1]

There is, of course, no suggestion that the Prince de Ligne was, like Choisy and others, tainted with a morbid desire to please, or had what one might call a feeling for the voluptuousness of dress. He merely wished to amuse himself, enhance the grace of his figure, and try the experiment, anxious, as he was, to try everything. He continues:

On another occasion I go to the gardens of Montecuculli, now of Razumowsky. I pass very quickly before a small chapel, not doubting that its little saint

[1] Compare Honoré d'Urfé in *Astrée*, Choisy in the *Nouvelle Astrée*, La Fontaine in the *Conte des Trois Commères*, Voltaire in *La Pucelle* and his stories, the lively romance *Faublas* by Louvet de Couvray, *M. de Pourceaugnac*, Faur's *Déguisements Forcés*, *Le Mariage de Figaro*, etc., etc.

is the goal of a procession that appeared at the moment at the head of a street. One angry devotee holds my post-horses, and shakes them as if he would throw them over. Another seizes my postilion, while an even more devout person beats him. I call out to him, 'Drive on to the devil' (the words were reproduced in the charge and nearly undid me). The postilion whips his horses, but they are held. The angry devotees almost fill the street, and seem anxious to belabour me. I get out, and, as I unfortunately have no stick, I disperse the whole procession with my sword. The priest alone remained, at the altar, and I went my way.

Two days later there was the devil to pay: clergy, citizens, police, lawyers, thirty books of complaint. Marshal von Neipperg sends for me. 'What have you done?' he says. 'That was all very well in the old days.' Even Charles VI, severe as he was, laughed when he heard that the Princes Eugene, de Commercy, and de Vaudemont were in the police-station for a row on the streets. 'But a procession! The Empress. . . . You are lost. Go and find Herr von Sacrottenbach.' 'I'll do nothing of the sort,' I said. 'If I meet him, perhaps I will speak to him. Much obliged, Herr Marshal. Your habitual goodness and your interest at the present moment merit my tenderest gratitude.' The case opened. I was more afraid of a sermon from the Empress than of dismissal. I find a big police official entering his house, which is pointed out to me. I go in. I tell him of the insult to my livery and myself, the harm done to my horses and postilion, and the harm they wanted to do to me. His Excellency says that they were right; that they would have been justified in killing my man. I get angry. His Excellency asks details, and I give them. He says that he does not know if that is true. I become furious, and tell him, with all the recklessness of my age at the time, 'Believe at once what I am telling you.'

I pretend that I am going to throw him out of the window. His Excellency pretends that he believes me, and the affair is smoothed over.

There is nothing else so curious as the kind of criticism that tries to prove when there is nothing to prove, and looks for reasons where there is nothing but caprice. Eugène Gilbert, who has written some strange things about that exquisite poet, Charles Van Lerberghe, discusses, in his preface to the *Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne*, whether the Prince's Catholicism was sound. "We must," he says, "regret the Voltairean outbursts in these *Memoirs*. Nevertheless, in spite of a certain amoralism, the Prince de Ligne was neither an unbeliever nor impious."[1]

What a solemn tone! and how surprised our hero would have been to hear this! What the critic misses is the Prince's critical faculty, his vivacity and humour. How can anyone imagine that the man who took nothing seriously,

[1] M. Gilbert goes so far as to represent the Prince as "a precursor of the *Genius of Christianity* thirty years before Chateaubriand," on the ground that Ligne, enumerating all the works of art inspired by Christianity, says that "the Catholic religion must please any man who is inspired with a taste for the fine arts." Ligne a forerunner of Chateaubriand! In that case, what about the Voltairean spirit which M. Gilbert has just mentioned? Is the religiosity of the Prince to be deduced from this cold enumeration of Catholic art? The Prince mentions, for instance, the "Descent from the Cross," a pagan work which excites the enthusiasm of artists, but touches no one. If Ligne had really been devout, he would have spoken in very different terms in his comparison of Rubens and Van Dyck.

who received an education in which God had so subordinate a part, and his ministers so ridiculous a part, would be likely to believe seriously ? It would have taken a mind clothed from infancy in religion to fail to be, first interested in, then entirely won by, the philosophic ideas of the eighteenth century. An obtuse intelligence might have remained indifferent to them. That was not Ligne's condition.

He believed in God pretty much as a man thinks about death when he is ill. He believed, certainly ; it was a small idea well stored away in his brain, and did not trouble him much. Remember his education. At the age of fourteen he heard about Molina, Marie Alacoque, Maria d'Agreda, Bossuet, Jansenius, Pascal, and goodness knows how many others. But he was ignorant of all the prayers that were necessary for saving his soul. A poor village priest teaches him the mysteries, which he does not himself understand. We remember his words : " I believed in Christianity, of which no one had spoken to me, and I was devout for a fortnight." He says again :

M. Neny said to me one day that the Empress had complained that I did not go to Mass. I begged him to represent to her that, if my ancestors, in less fortunate circumstances than hers, had not always remained faithful to her,[1] we should have been dispensed

[1] The Lignes clung to Austria throughout the wars of religion (in the sixteenth century).

from going two hundred years ago. That was not likely to satisfy her. Hence the first time I went to her, about some business or other, she reproached me with my lack of religion. I could not help but say to her that the little I had was good, as no one could accuse me of hypocrisy, and that I was a better Christian than those who told her that I was not a Christian. I was facing a sunny window, and it was bad for my eyes. The Empress thought I was weeping, and I did not think fit to undeceive her. She said: 'You have a good heart, and I will continue to hope for your conversion. Stay in my room a little. I do not want people to see you go out with so sad an air.' At that I nearly did shed tears—of gratitude. Yet, as soon as I got out, I laughed, and told everybody I met. The Empress heard, and she forgave me once more; as she forgave a hundred other reckless things of all sorts.

That is not much, but the following confession almost reads like a farce:

For the rest, I have always done everything with all my heart. I was obliged once to take the Communion with the Empress, Maria Theresa, and at ten in the evening I had not succeeded in discovering a confessor who knew French. I did not want to confess my sins in too gross German. They mentioned a certain Father Aubri or Anbri in the house in which I was supping. They gave me his address, and I went there at eleven. I awoke everybody, took the wrong staircase, and found myself in the rooms of a pretty woman. They took me for a lover, and maltreated me. I open a door, which closes behind me, and I see that I am in a barn. People, hearing the noise, come up, and take me for a robber. I fly, damning the whole business. At length I find the staircase of

my Reverend Father and determine to do everything in quite good faith. I say to him: 'You have been a Jesuit, and so you are, doubtless, indulgent. Do not get up. Behold me at your knees.' I begin the prayer, and then my confession. He suspects that it is all a joke, and, terrified either by my impious insolence or by the number of my little sins, he puts me out of doors.

Nevertheless, he makes the sign of the cross devoutly when the balls fall round him like hailstones in March. This enables M. Gilbert to redeem his irrelevancies a little, and write: "Thus he was sceptical by temperament rather than on principle." In any case, he will never be accused of intolerance. His position as a Freemason of the Orient Lodge of Mons guarantees his tolerance. We can judge it also by his penetrating *Memoir on the Jews*. This early Zionist studied the Jewish question with rare intelligence, at a time when it was as thorny as, or more thorny than, it now is.

What freedom of thought, what breadth of mind, must not this distinguished noble have had, in spite of the class prejudice which, against his judgment, infected him at times, to write:

The Jews have various virtues. They are never drunk, always obedient, precise, and observant of the laws. They are loyal subjects of their sovereigns in the midst of rebels, and are never angry. They are united, and sometimes hospitable; and the wealthy help the poor.

And later:

We often make men what they are. It has been said: 'The Jews are dirty and dishonest.' They have been, but treat them properly . . . and put confidence in them, and they will be neither one nor the other.

He even goes so far as to justify or excuse their vices:

If they are not honest in trade, it is because they know the trouble they have taken, and they exact payment for the humiliations they are constantly experiencing. As to roguery, every religion allows them to cheat.

After this last observation I, for my part, decline to consider Ligne a loyal son of the Catholic Church:

It is very curious that they are so much attached to the grossest and most ridiculous fable, because, if the Messiah has not yet come upon the earth, there is reason to think that he will never come. That is a proof of character.

How is it that, interested as they are, they never give up this belief? Their obstinacy will cost them a good deal in the next world, but does them honour in this. They are not as vile as they are said to be.

Ligne then inveighs against the odious "ghetti," and proposes to leave in Europe the Jewish bankers and merchants, who are wealthy and already assimilated, and send the others to Judæa, where they can create a new and happier life for themselves. Baruch Hagani

remarks, in his *Sionisme politique : Précurseurs et Militants* that the Prince de Ligne was not insensible to the charms of pretty Jewesses. At Vienna he often visited two of them, and used to say that their only defect was that they lived on the third story. As he was now old, this meant a painful amount of exercise. He wrote to them : " Good-bye. You are decidedly the last girls I have adored on the third story." His friends were much amused at this passion. When his Turkish servant, Ismael, died, the Marquis de Bombai wrote this epitaph :

> ' Rest in peace, good Ismael,
> Thy master will deplore,
> But his feelings restore,
> With the daughters of Israel.'

Mme. d'Eybenberg, *née* Marianne Meyer, morganatic widow of the Prince von Reuss, who conversed on an equal footing with men like Ligne and Clary, had an elder sister Sarah, who was very much to the Prince's taste. Later we find him writing to a certain Rachel Sevin : " Ah, dear Mlle. Robert, angel at heart and Robert the Devil in mind, keep a place for me in both." These ladies found that the great noble was still gallant in his age.

In 1744 Ligne took to the Mass as others take to the green tables. But, with all the goodwill in the world, we shall find it difficult to recognize a religious note in, for instance,

the testament he wrote at this time. Durieu writes, in regard to certain instructions given to the Abbé Hénousse about Masses to be celebrated:

His Highness is very religious. He has just told me that he has instructed the Abbé Hénousse to say fifteen Masses for his intention, and has directed me to book them amongst the ordinary expenses, and distribute fifteen farthings amongst the poor for the same intention. I have told the priest to send me his bill as soon as he has said the Masses, and he has promised to do so (1774).

And there is another story which shows how surprised the Prince's people, even the Abbé Hénousse, were to hear mention of Masses:

Our parish priest having concluded the last station in connection with the Jubilee of the 21st of last month, and returned to the church with his parishioners, exhorted them to pray for all who were named for that purpose—the Prince and his family. M. Hénousse, who was in the church, said, mockingly, when he heard the mention of the Prince and his family: 'That is very necessary.' He repeated it several times. This having come to the ears of our parish priest, he was very angry, and said that he would write to Cambrai about Hénousse. He dropped this plan, and, on the tenth of this month, he went like a roaring lion to Hénousse's house, to tell him that he was the most miserable of scoundrels. They counted that our priest called him 'unworthy' twenty-four times. Even from the Quatre-Chaussées our parish priest could be heard thundering at this singular man, yet the Abbé's voice could not be heard at all.

Finally, there is this bit, so familiar to us Walloons:

At last there was peace over pots and glasses. Hénousse will dine with our *curé* to-morrow, and the *curé* will dine with Hénousse on the Monday of our *kermesse*. Bravo, the scoundrels. Our *curé* began well, and ended badly (August 12, 1776).

Eleven years before his death Ligne will be reconciled with the Catholics, who, more concerned about the appearance than the reality, hastened to rejoice over the return of the prodigal son.

Suddenly, in 1803, I have an idea of making a general confession. I have forgotten my prayers, but I go on my knees. I try to say my *Confiteor*, but I cannot remember it. I begin, and forget part of what I want to say. My good devil of a parish priest does not know French very well, and, delighted, perhaps, at seeing a great sinner at his feet, he gives me absolution quickly, and even forgets to impose a penance. Why should I not begin again? There is a risk in not doing it. And what does one risk in promising not to fail again when age or indifference has come, and go to church every Sunday when the reason one did not go exists no longer? It was the interruption of my mornings and of my literary work. Now I have nearly finished those, like my other adventures. I will and can be as unhappy in the other world after being unhappy in this.

God will pardon me this *egoist* character in easy circumstances; and so will my readers. They will see that throughout my life I have been neither a prude nor a hypocrite. Cynics will find plenty of cynicism in it, and the devout will rejoice to see a

Christian philosophy take the place of the other. The impious and the indifferent will judge whether respect for men is worth the trouble of dying impenitent. They will, perhaps, believe me rather than any other, and will not feel that they are dishonoured if they follow my example.

There is, clearly, no doubt. This general confession is not the act of a heart that humbles itself. It indicates a fine and sound intelligence of heart and mind. In another place the Prince writes: "I made a masquerade of the Tower of Babel. Was it not a profanation? and how was it that I was forgiven?" With much humour he reproduces these words, spoken to him by a nun when he had small-pox: "Take three cups of tea, in the name of the Holy Trinity, and I will breathe over each three times in the form of a cross." Recovery was said to be certain.

He did not spare the clergy and the monks, moreover. On March 6, 1786, he writes that the canonesses always win their cases, because they have more influence on the courts. Of his daughter-in-law's uncle, the Bishop of Vilna, he writes: "A fool of a Bishop . . . since hanged." He protests against the preachers who fancy that they are always addressing monsters, and, in a fine mood of Christian humility, he says: "One who is born in a good position has almost as many virtues at birth as they

demand of a man at death if he is to be saved."

In France, Charles Joseph declares that piety is a condition. He is delighted to hear Voltaire say: "I will allow Bossuet alone to be a good Christian." He laughs with the philosopher when Candide's father, having asked an officer of the Ligne regiment what religion he was, got the reply: "My parents had me brought up in the Catholic religion." This, again, hardly seems the sentiment of a truly religious soul:

To whom is death not a good thing? It suits everybody: (1) men of good conscience, who are sure of receiving their reward in the next world; (2) men of bad conscience, who do not believe in the next world, and, confined to this, are not displeased to quit it for non-existence, as their unbelief tells them.

There is also, amongst other things, a letter addressed to the parish priest of Belœil in July 1786:

I know nothing more respectable than the functions of a good priest. It is a civil magistracy, ecclesiastical and political: reassuring the conscience, not depressing it; emphasizing the mercy of God, not representing him always with the thunderbolt in his hand; thus introducing the love of him into the hearts of all. M. Defenelon, the best of all our archbishops, whose name will always be treasured in the Church, and the world, once said in a similar case: 'Ah, monsieur le curé, let those who have no other pleasure dance. In the cities there are other pleasures which are much more dangerous. And if your lady parishioners, leaving

the dance at nine or ten o'clock, in a lively condition, to take a walk in my garden, were to do anything wrong, we should have to reproach ourselves with that. At present, at least, we know that they are so tired at four or five o'clock in the morning that they think only of going to bed, to sleep until they have to be off to the shop or the fields.'

Lastly—for we should never have done quoting proofs, as our chief purpose is, as we have said often enough, to amuse—take the following fragment. Somewhere at Mooregen, near Ghent, Charles Joseph saw a possessed woman who was reduced to calmness, for several hours, by the use of holy water and the host. He is not quite convinced of the medicinal properties of the Sacrament.

Is it interest? No. Neither the Church nor she has any thought of it. Is it vanity? Singularity? No. No one came to see her, or thought about her. Is it imagination? As I said, they spoke the name of Jesus too low for her to hear it. Still, to make sure that it was not this latter cause, I would have liked them to give her a wafer that was not consecrated. If it did not have the same effect, nothing could more strongly confirm the miracle. It was worth while going into the matter for the greater triumph of the Christian religion. But they took my suggestion very ill, and wrongly—it seems to me—replied that the pretence would be a sort of profanation or of scandalous mystification.

In the end he adds, categorically, that he does not believe in the miraculous. He speaks of

the Eternal Father as if he were talking of the manager of a business. He finds it good or bad, as the case may be. Of a verity one does not know where to turn in this tangle of spiritual contradictions. It seems, however, that our hero practised religion . . . in hours of danger; and that he believed in God, like a great many other people of his time, whenever it did not disturb his digestion.

On the other hand, although Charles Joseph did not always faithfully practise the Catholic religion, he cherished in his heart one of the most Christian of virtues: charity or, rather, kindliness. But it was, on the whole, an instinctive quality. Reasoning had little to do with it. The natural tone he adopts at the close of *Mon Séjour chez M. de Voltaire* will show best what I mean:

> Both a good and a great man, a combination without which one can never entirely be either one or the other, for genius gives a wider range to goodness, and goodness makes genius more natural.

He does not boast of the generosity of his heart; the only proof we have of it is the account of his expenditure. When he died, Mme. Eynard wrote:

> We have learned that the good Prince, who used to say that he was so poor, deprived himself of half of his income to give to the needy. How vexed I am that I did not know that while he lived! I would have loved him still more.

On account of his title and his fortune he was much importuned, as we shall often see in the course of this work. But his kindliness did not stop at the gift of money. It is mainly in the eternal offering of his loving heart, the tender sincerity of his reception of appeals, that he seems so great to us.

The avaricious father has a prodigal son. The maxim is well borne out in the case of Ligne. Closely confined by the economies of his father, Ligne would launch out joyously upon a course of prodigality as soon as he had his own treasury. When he died, Claude Lamoral II left to Charles Joseph the estates of Belœil, Bliquy, Chapelle-à-Wez, Ligne, Villers-notre-Dame, Villiers-Saint-Amant, Ellignies-Sainte-Anne, Stanbruges, Quevaucamp, Ville-Pommereul, Hautrages, Imbrechies, Montrœul, Thulin, Baudour, Lilly, Cambron, Gondregnies, Jeumont, Rouvroil, Herchies, Antoing, Vezon, Fontenoy, Vaulx, Péronne, Maubray, Maulde, Bromesnil, Fagnolles, Istrud, Fauquemberghe, Quarouble, Huysse, Castres, Rumpst, Gelen, Amstenraed, etc. This meant a large, very large, fortune, but the expense of maintaining a regiment of soldiers, two houses at Paris and one at Brussels, the château at Belœil and its gardens, and a residence at Vienna, was considerable. Then there were his travels . . . I had nearly forgotten his travels :

I wager that I have spent three years of my life in a carriage, and that the post alone has cost me more than 150,000 florins. I believe the gaming-table has cost me as much. My campaigns have cost me more than 500,000, and I have given more than 200 either to my own regiment or to other troops under my command. I have, perhaps, spent 500,000 florins on building and laying out the gardens—it is not too much—and the same on festivals, reviews, manœuvres, inaugurations, etc. The normal cost of my establishment in the Low Countries might be 60,000 florins, without counting my travelling establishment, the cost of which I would put at 30,000 or 40,000. In sum, I reckon I have spent six or seven millions in our Viennese florins, or twenty millions French, since I came into the world.

Without counting the hundred and one entertainments he offered to the whole world, on every pretext that presented itself, often without any pretext whatever:

In 1773, I gave one of the finest entertainments I have ever seen, on the canal from Brussels to Antwerp, in honour of the Princesse de Bouillon, whom I thought I loved—and whom I merely desired. The water was aflame, so great was the number of illuminated boats for my guests, my people, several bands of musicians and spectators—at least a thousand in number—and my yacht in the middle of it all.

I have, for my part, only a very limited confidence in the Prince's mathematics. I believe that this account of his expenditure may very well be exaggerated to the extent of several million francs. One should run over the accounts

of his stewards to see how embarrassed these poor men were occasionally. They and the Princess tried to check the Prince, but Ligne went his way, in spite of them all, and threw money out of the doors and windows.

Many made a good profit out of his generosity. With his mania for theatrical representations—which seem to have been very expensive even at that time—he engaged actors who demanded very high pay. As soon as he became general steward of the Ligne household, Ignace Van den Broucke had to find the money to pay for jewels, a new livery for the Prince's servants (two thousand livres), drums and band instruments for the Ligne Dragoons, a room at Brussels for the Parisian architect Bélanger.[1]

[1] Van den Broucke was engaged in 1771, and was of great service to the Prince, as is clear from the following account, by the Abbé Tirouse, of a scene which took place in the presence of the architect De Stercke, the servant Godefroid, and the Abbé :

During the journey M. Naisse received a most severe and humiliating reprimand from the Prince in the presence of us all. He told him that he was surprised to hear that he still continued to make jests at the steward's expense. He denied this, saying that the report was false. 'No,' said the Prince, 'it is not a false report. It is true. You are always drunk, and in that state you do not know what you are doing, still less what you say. I am likely to dismiss my steward for you ! I can find a thousand Naisses, but I cannot always find a Van den Broucke to take care of my household and preserve my property. He is a man who works, and takes infinite pains for me. Yet you venture to oppose him in everything. I recognize and appreciate him in everything. You are a libeller, like your village, Belœil. I don't care a fig for your Belœil and its people. They do nothing but tear each other to pieces, out of jealousy of each other's good

Théaulon, Charles Joseph's man of business, says that Bélanger, with his twenty-five or thirty workmen, "both sculptors and engravers," will demand 25,000 florins for decorating this room.

In 1773 the situation was, apparently, drifting from bad to worse, for we find Van den Broucke writing a piteous letter to his master:

> There is not a moment to be lost. The whole world is against us. Your Highness's expenses and liberalities are swollen here to an extent that would make the richest man tremble. Those who profit most by your generosity are the first to cry aloud, and in public, about Your Highness's excessive expenditure, and to spread the report everywhere. The people of Brussels, who have always been the most patient and most devoted, have become the most importunate and most distrustful. All are agreed about the state of Your Highness's affairs. They say that you can never recover. Wherever I go, that is dinned into my ears. It is with very great pain that I write this to Your Highness.
>
> But I should be much to blame if I did not say it; indeed, my unswerving devotion and attachment to your interests compel me to take this step. I throw myself at Your Highness's feet, imploring you to have some regard for your illustrious house.

Ligne's high spirits did a good deal of harm to his affairs. Rogier, a Mons lawyer, writes the following letter to Van den Broucke:

> luck. That's your Belœil, and I will never set foot in it again. I forbid you ever again to speak of Van den Broucke, either for or against, under penalty of dismissal. He has full authority over you.'

Moreover, it was said to him [the Prince de Ligne] here, according to what I have heard from M. Le Roy, that he had a steward who managed his estate very well for him; and his reply, that he could do them more harm in a day than you could remedy in three months, made a bad impression. . . . I have no influence on His Highness. If I had sufficient to be able to speak to him, I would beg him to put on a more philosophic attitude here, and not continue to allow people to smash bells [Ligne had, for a joke, put the bell of the Mayor of Mons out of order], and tell him that the regulation you have forced upon him is of the most economical character. Let him break bells and windows elsewhere as much as he likes.

A few years earlier the Prince had tried to raise a loan at Liège, and it had been refused. The people of Liège, malicious from birth—as they themselves say—had replied that he would not come so far for a loan if he could get one nearer, and that, moreover, it was "difficult to recover one's debts against a lord of the land."

We can understand that, with a master who knew so little about mathematics, his servants did not omit to help themselves to the cash-box:

My disinclination for business or any kind of calculation, and sometimes the fear of giving myself trouble, led me to give to some only to be robbed by others. One day I counted *fourteen hairdressers*, or servants of my people. They went by the name of commissioners. They were anxious that I should take them into my service—or take me into theirs.

On one occasion he entered into a transaction with "a sort of poor relation in the country." He lost a hundred thousand crowns in it; but

they talked for three days about my disinterestedness. I thought it would last, and that all Paris at least would say: 'There is the man who refused to ruin this poor young fellow by selling up his estate at Saint-Félix!' It was soon forgotten, however, and the young man was the first to forget it. The reasonable people who had foreseen this reminded me how they had predicted it, and that was the end of the matter.

The tailor Dargé writes to our hero on March 12, 1772:

As there is no other way of securing payment from Your Amiable Highness except by taking legal action . . .

This time Ligne does not laugh. He returns the letter to Van den Broucke, with this note on the margin:

The letter is not tender: deal with it, and spare us this unpleasantness.

M. Fernand Caussy has discovered, in the French National Archives, the documents seized in 1791 in the house of the banker Théaulon. Dargé, in one of these, writes to Théaulon, on March 12, 1776:

I seem to see the end of the business: one has always to do at the finish what one ought to have done at

first. I cannot even postpone it, because I would very much like it to commence while the Prince is there, and have him informed of my conduct. He is just and will bear me no grudge. I am only waiting for the favour of your reply. Please do not delay.

M. Caussy says that the reply, which was so pressingly demanded, cannot have been satisfactory. The Prince being in Paris a short time afterwards, Dargé instructed a lawyer to proceed, and he, with the ardour of a Republican, claimed that the Prince should be arrested. The magistrates, who liked to pose as the defenders of the people, complied with the tailor's request. As soon, however, as he had signed the decree, the judge, fearing that the arrest of so distinguished a person as the Prince de Ligne might have unpleasant consequences, hurried off to the Rue Jacob, where the Ligne mansion was. Not finding the defendant there, he wrote him this memorable letter:

PARIS, *June* 12, 1776.

MY PRINCE,

Chance submitted for my decision the other day a demand which your tailor brought before the Court of which I have the honour to be a member. On the strength of a bill which Your Highness endorsed to his profit, he claims the advantage of the privilege which grants the *bourgeois* of Paris the right of bodily arrest against their debtors, when they are foreigners. I had no option but to grant him this decree, but I at once took the precautions which my zeal suggested to prevent a regrettable scandal which would, doubtless,

have mortified a Prince of your rank. On hearing of your absence from your home, to which I had gone, my anxiety was relieved, as it is fairly easy for me to ward off these events when I am warned in time, though it is impossible to be entirely reassured about their consequences when one has not had time to take the necessary measures in regard to them. The lawyer employed by your opponent has given me his word that the decree obtained against you by his client will not leave his hands unless I am informed of it. I should not have been able to take advantage of his condescension if your presence in Paris had enabled your opponent to obtain the clerk's sentence immediately after it was written out, as is usual. I shall be very happy if the occasion enables me to testify my patriotic zeal and my respectful attachment to a Prince to whose virtues I and mine have always felt it a duty to pay tribute. Your Highness may communicate my letter to your agents in Paris, so that they may do what is necessary. I feel that it is needless to remark that scruples in regard to justice compel me to insist that my name shall never appear in matters of this sort. My duty permits me only, dear Prince, to write you directly. It would be cruel to let the unfortunate suspect that the general laws are not the same for people of all classes. I have the honour to be, with the most profound respect, etc.,

TOUR-NAIRE DE LA TOUR,
Conseiller au Châtelet.

M. Caussy tells us that the Prince had to leave Paris somewhat hastily, in spite of the protection of M. Tour-Naire de la Tour. He was angry, but he paid Dargé in three bills, one payable in one year, the second in two and the third in three. Dargé died before the debt was entirely

discharged. He sent the Prince a message which M. Caussy calls "very pathetic." The decree of arrest had turned the poor tailor's head. It was an officious service which the lawyer had wanted to do him, but he had merely wished to proceed against the Prince's property. Against this he was prepared to proceed drastically, but he "always respected his august person and all about him, even at the risk of his fortune and his honour." The Prince did not forgive him.

There was no lack of legal quarrels in the life of our hero. Such things, in fact, were traditional in his family. From the inventory of the archives of Belœil made by M. Leuridant, in the chapter entitled "Lawsuits," we take, casually, the following:

1767. The Prince de Ligne *versus* Jean François Baudour, claiming a fine in connection with hunting.—The Prince de Ligne *versus* the Mayor and councillors of Hautrage in regard to the extraction of clay for making pipes.—The Prince de Ligne *versus* Augustin Tellier and his colleagues in connection with the extraction of coal at Thulin.

1772. The Prince de Ligne *versus* the Receiver General of Hainaut in regard to the right of drawing lots.

1780. The Prince de Ligne *versus* Ve. Massy, Receiver of Ville, for default in returning accounts.

1782. The successive lords of the manor of Quevaucamps *versus* the administrators of the district in regard to pasturage on their common. (This case lasted more

than a century; it ended in an agreement between the Prince de Ligne and the said administrators, October 2, 1782.)

1784. Consultation of a solicitor as to the seignorial rights of Péruwelz, adjoining Antoing: lawsuit of the Prince de Ligne against the Duc de Croy-Solre.

1786. The Prince de Ligne *versus* Lefébure, his agent at Ville-Pommereul, over accounts.—The Prince de Ligne takes action for the Sieur Le Coq against the people of Loy de Pommereul.—The Prince de Ligne *versus* the priests and monks of Saint-Ghislain in regard to the woods of Imberchies.—The Prince de Ligne *versus* Sieur Delfry, for the seignorial rights of Villerot.

These lawsuits often turned out very badly for the Prince. In connection with a certain Petit, of Baudour, Claus writes:

After saluting you, I have to inform you of a rather singular and audacious action on the part of M. Petit, formerly Bailey of Baudour. He had the effrontery to send an usher, armed with his mace, to the Prince. Thus equipped, the man ventured to speak to the Prince, presenting his mace at the same time. The Prince, enraged by this ceremony, said to him: 'Put down thy mace. I care nothing for thee or thy mace. Get out of my house quickly, and tell Petit that he is a scoundrel. Know that I have clerks in my house to whom you ought to address yourself.' So he put him out of doors (April 27, 1776).

We could not give here even a summary of all the lawsuits that the Prince drew upon himself. For that we must refer the reader to the work of M. Leuridant, which we have already

quoted. At a venture we take this note, written from Vienna, October 5, 1775 :

> Hurry up with our business ! I swear to you that if I do not get to the end of it within a year, I will never hear anything about lawyers again. Make the scoundrels get on !

The works the Prince published must also have cost him a good deal. Apart from his having a press at Belœil (which is disputed), and before ruining the Walther Brothers, of Dresden, by the publication of the thirty-four volumes of his *Military, Literary, and Sentimental Miscellanies*, he paid himself for the issue of his works ; and he paid dear. The Abbé Villette, his son's tutor, writes, on June 3rd :

> Our patron is having his books printed. If it is a supplement to the *Memoirs*, it will not be so dear ; but it will, nevertheless, be expensive, as far as I can gather. He is a very busy man, as is also M. Deschamps, who has become his secretary in these matters. If many secretaries knew the secret of getting money, we should not much regret what they cost.

In 1774, the Prince wanted to send his copyist de Vercourt (of whom everybody complained), to Paris, in order to obtain permission to publish a military work, and to get it printed. The cost was at first estimated at 1,000 louis. The Keeper of the Seals refused permission. A little

later, however, we learn that "M. de Vercourt is taking steps to secure the printing of the work." Here, taken from the documents, is what an "author's bill" might come to at that time :

My Lord,

M. Ducoudrai has just informed me of a printer who, after many difficulties, has made up his mind to take up, under seal of the strictest secrecy, the *Prejudices* and *Fantasies*. That will be much better, and will be less expensive and less troublesome, than the enterprises of Montargis and Orléans, which drag out with no prospect of an end. The work may consist of twenty-four sheets, and each volume will have about 260 pages. It will be printed in the style Your Highness desires—small characters and small pages, with wide margins, at 120 florins a sheet, including paper, which the printer will supply. These are his conditions : A total of twenty-four sheets will cost about a thousand crowns. He demands payment of half of this at the start, half the remainder when the first volume is delivered, and the balance at the completion of the work. He further demands ten golden louis as a bonus for his workers, and to ensure their silence. M. Ducoudrai was obliged to accept the same conditions when his three works were printed.

If this suits Your Highness, we will begin at once. I have called upon M. Théaulon and told him of the arrangement. He says that he has no funds in hand for this business, or for the engraver, M. Choffard, who must have twenty-five louis. The 1,500 florins for the printer and 600 florins for the engraver make 2,100 florins in all.

We cannot quote the whole letter, nor those

which followed it; but it is quite clear that even in those days publishers were keen business men.

I have just counted the number of pages I have written on the Prince's character, and, decidedly, I must close this chapter. Have I clearly defined his character? It will be a thousand to one, in some people's minds, that I have not. To me it seems that I have.

CHAPTER III

VISIT TO VOLTAIRE

In 1757, the Princesse de Ligne gave birth, on May 26th, to Marie Léopoldine; and in 1775, on February 1st, the daughter married, at Belœil, Count Jean Népomucène de Clary. In the same year Ligne opened his military career, in the Seven Years' War.

Although he had no opportunity of showing his brilliant qualities as a tactician—he owed his promotion to his rank rather than his exploits—Ligne did all that was possible. He fought as a captain and did wonders at Kollin (June 18, 1757), Leuthen-Lissa (December 5, 1757), and Breslau. He has told us how he became colonel of his father's regiment:

> The colonel of the Ligne regiment having been cut off before the battle of Bresbour, and having been taken prisoner, I found myself, as we saw, having lost my other superior officers and captains, in command of the battalion. I was promoted lieutenant-colonel after the battle of Leuthen, and I commanded both battalions of my father's regiment.

In 1758, at the battle of Hochkirk, Frederick II in turn was suddenly attacked, and Ligne and his Walloon regiment brilliantly opened a fight of which the rest of the army failed to take advantage. Charles Joseph was appointed colonel in command, in the place of the officer who was held prisoner in Germany, and who would become a general on his return. We have mentioned the anecdote. Claude Lamoral said: "It was bad enough, sir, to have you for a son without having you also for my colonel." To which our hero replied: "Monseigneur, I am not responsible for either the one or the other; for the second misfortune Your Highness must address yourself to the Emperor."

In 1759, Ligne declares himself very happy. His wife has given him a son, Charles. He says:

> I have a son. Ah, how I will love him! I should already like to write about him. . . . If I get back from this war, I shall say to him: 'Welcome. I wager that I will love you with my whole heart.'

At once Ligne poured upon this dear creature all the tenderness with which his heart was filled, and which he had never had the courage to display to his father or his wife. The child received its baptism of fire at a very early age:

> I gave orders for a small outpost-engagement with the Prussians, and, springing into the saddle with him, I took his little hand in mine, as we galloped along,

and I said to him, as I ordered the first shot, 'It would be very fine, my Charles, for us to have a little wound together.' And he laughed, and swore, and was very lively.

The year 1759 saw the Prince charged with a mission to France:

When I was sent to Versailles, to take the news of the victory and of the capture of 17,000 Prussians at Marxen, the King put a score of foolish questions to me and the others. He asked the Curé of Saint Germain, for instance, if there had been many deaths during the winter. 'A bad year,' he repeated a dozen times, addressing the words to all who were present at his levee. He asked our ambassador Stahrenberg what sort of weather they had at Vienna, and whether there were many old men; and he asked the Papal Nuncio how the Pope's pages were dressed. What was my astonishment when, after the round of reverence I received from all the members of the royal family I was taken to a sort of second queen; and she looked very much more like a queen than the first, who was a badly-educated old woman. Mme. de Pompadour—for it was she—said a hundred politico-ministerial and politico-military absurdities to me. She gave me two or three plans of campaign, and then said, emphatically: 'You see, sir, what we do for you. Are you not satisfied?' I said: 'I swear, madam, that I know nothing about it.' She added: 'We are selling our plate to support your war.' She, in fact, did not hesitate to say to me: 'I am not pleased with your women at Prague.' 'Neither am I,' I replied. 'They are badly educated,' she went on, 'or they would pay their court better to Mme. la Dauphine.' There was nothing to say to a piece of stupidity like that, and I withdrew.

Brought up in an austere household, married

hastily, and accustomed to the Puritanism of the northern courts, Ligne threw himself heartily into the gaiety of Paris, the centre of all elegance. Lack of money did not embarrass him:

The King gave me a superb ring, which I pawned the same day, as I had so little respect for anything at that time. I was in a hurry to live, seeing that the war was serious, and fearing that I might not have chance enough for pleasure before I died.

Later he adds:

As soon as I got to Vienna I sold the Empress a snuff-box which the King had given me also.

He soon made friends at Paris and Versailles, and there was no sort of folly that he did not engage in with the young nobles, married and single, of his age, making himself a spectacle to all in the city:

The Duke of Orléans and I considered that we were victims of our curiosity. One day we followed two young ladies who were clever enough to detach us in the garden of the Tuileries. (We merely wanted to know if they were not girls who had escaped from the paternal house, or mischievous members of good families, as happened at times.) They led us to the Champs Elysées, to a sort of hut where three young men, playing with their knives, begged me to assist these young ladies. I was lucky enough to hide my decoration, with its golden chain, and my diamond watch; but they made me pay out, one by one, the dozen louis I had in my purse. On another occasion, as I came away late from a supper at which I had foolishly lost all the money I had, and was making my way home

at three in the morning, through the mud and the snow, to my lodging, half an hour's walk from the rue Saint-Florentin, I fell in with a band of thieves. Luckily, the Pont Royal sentinel saved me by telling me to stop until they had gone by. He said that the officers were after them. I had a narrow escape of being stripped by the scoundrels.

It appears, however, that life in Paris is very expensive. Ligne gives "bills of exchange everywhere." Compelled to return, he finds his father at Baudour "in a large, badly-lighted room, with the gout and two snipe for his joint." The bills reach the old Prince at the moment his son is embracing him . . . Ligne does not hesitate to return to the army at once.

The Russians having taken Berlin, Charles Joseph went into garrison in the occupied city; but Frederick II, having won the victory at Torgau, in Saxony (November 2, 1760), soon returned to his capital. That was the end of the Prince de Ligne's distinction in the Seven Years' War. In 1763, the year of the Peace of Hubertsburg, he was made major-general, and the title was officially confirmed in 1764.

After staying at Paris in March, our hero went to see Voltaire at Ferney.[1] The father of Candide did not hide the admiration he felt for the brilliant young Prince. "I desire," he wrote, "rather than hope to see you again

[1] The Prince's *liaison* with the Duchesse de Mazarin dates from this period, March 1764.

amongst our mountains. Your appearance here has left us regrets that will last long." Ligne was not less enchanted with his visit. His account of it is very picturesque, if a little obscure at times:

The best thing I could do in visiting M. de Voltaire was to make no show of wit. I spoke to him only in order to make him speak. I stayed a week at his house, and I wish I could recall all the things—sublime, simple, gay, and amiable—which fell from his lips incessantly. But it is really impossible. I laughed or I admired him—it was one long intoxication. He was charming, fresh, piquant, surprising, even in his faults, his inaccurate knowledge, his prejudices, his lack of taste for the fine arts, his caprices, his pretensions, all that he could not be, and all that he was. He wanted to be regarded as a profound statesman or as a scholar—even wanted to be a bore. At that time he loved the English Constitution. I remember saying to him: 'M. de Voltaire, do not forget the strength it has in its seas. Without that it would not last long.' 'The seas!' he said. 'You lead me to make many reflections on that.'

A man from Geneva, who bored him, was announced. 'Some Tronchin, quick,' he said; which meant that they were to represent that he was ill. The man went away. 'What do you think of Geneva?' he asked me one day, knowing that I had been there in the morning. I knew that at the time he detested Geneva. 'Frightful place!' I said, though it was not true. I told M. de Voltaire, in the presence of Mme. Denys, something that had happened to her, under the impression that it was to Mme. de Graffigny. M. de Ximenès had defied her to quote any verse of which he could not at once name the author. He did not miss one. Mme. Denys, to catch him, gave four verses, which she made

up there and then. 'Now, marquis, who made those?' 'The seeker of wit, madame,' he said. 'Bravo, bravo,' said Voltaire. 'Heavens, I think it was very wrong of her. Come, my niece, laugh.'

He was busy at the time interpreting and paraphrasing the tedious Abbé de Fleury's *History of the Church*. 'It isn't a history,' he said, 'it is a lot of stories. There are only Bossuet and Fléchier that I allow to be good Christians.'

'Ah, M. de Voltaire,' I said, 'and also certain reverend fathers whose children gave you a handsome education.' He said many pleasant things about them.

'You have come from Venice,' he said. 'Did you see the Procurator, Pococurante, there?'

'No,' I replied, 'I do not remember seeing him.'

'You have not read *Candide*, then,' he said, angrily, for at one time he liked best one of his own works.

'Pardon, pardon, M. de Voltaire,' I said. 'I was too much distracted. I was thinking of the astonishment I experienced when I heard the Venetian gondoliers singing Tasso's *Jerusalem*.'

'What! Pray explain that.'

'They test the voices and memories of their comrades, as Ménalque and Mélibée used to do, on the Grand Canal on the fine summer evenings. One begins with a sort of recitative, another takes it up, and continues. I do not believe that the cabmen of Paris know the *Henriade* by heart, and, even if they did, they would make a mess of its beautiful verses with their coarse tone, their frightful accent, and their brandy-soaked voices.'

'Because these people are barbarians, enemies of harmony, cut-throats,' said Voltaire. 'That is the people; and our men of spirit [*gens d'esprit*] have so much of that quality that they even put it in the titles of their works. A work of spirit! That is a piece of folly. *The Spirit of the Laws* means expending one's wit on the laws. I have not the honour of being able

to understand it. But I quite understand the *Persian Letters*. That's a good book.'

'So there are a few men of letters in whom you take a little interest.'

'Oh, certainly. One must. There is D'Alembert, for instance, who, finding he had no imagination, became a geometrician. There is Diderot, who, in trying to make people believe that he had imagination, becomes inflated and declamatory. There is Marmontel, whose poetry, between ourselves, is unintelligible. These people would tell you that I am jealous. They may please themselves. At the Court I am considered a partisan and flatterer: in the city, too philosophical: in the Academy, an enemy of the philosophers: at Rome, Antichrist, on account of a few jokes on its abuses and a little gaiety in the Oriental style: a teacher of despotism to the Parlement: a bad Frenchman, because I have spoken well of the English: a thief and benefactor of booksellers: a libertine on account of a Jeanne whom my enemies have made more guilty: inquisitive and complimentary to the cultivated, and intolerant because I preach tolerance. Did you ever see an epigram or a song in my style? There you have the dungeon of the wicked. These Rousseaus sent me over to the devil. I began well with both of them. I drank champagne with the first at the house of your relative, the Duc d'Aremberg, where he used to fall asleep at supper. I have coquetted with the second [Jean Jacques]; but I have been driven out of Geneva, where he is detested, for saying that he made me feel that I wanted to walk on all fours.'

He laughed at some impromptu folly, some miserable play on words; and he indulged in like manner. His joy was complete when he showed me a letter from the Chevalier de Lille, who had just written to reproach him for carrying out badly a commission in regard to a watch. 'You must be very stupid, sir,' etc. It is, I believe, to me that he dedicated his joke on la Corneille,

which has been so often repeated. I gave him the occasion to make it when he asked me how I found her. '*Nigra*,' I said, 'but not *formosa*.' He spared me his Father Adam, and he thanked me for giving a refuge to Father Griffet, of whom he was very fond; as he was also of Father de Neufville, whom he recommended to me.

'They say that I cannot stand criticism,' he said to me one day. 'Do you know this one? I can't tell how this devil of a man, who cannot spell, and who works at poetry sometimes as if he were digging a field, could write four such good lines on me:

> Candide is a worthless blackguard,
> Devoid both of virtue and wit.
> In him we at once recognize
> The younger brother of the Pucelle.'[1]

'You seem to me to be on bad terms with him for the time being,' I said. 'It is at one and the same time a German quarrel and a lovers' quarrel.'

The trifle made him smile. He often said such things, and liked to hear them. One would have said that he sometimes had feelings for the dead such as one has for the living. His mobility made them lovable to him in varying degrees at different times. Then, for instance, it was Fénélon, La Fontaine, and Molière who were highest in his favour. 'My niece,' he said to Mme. Denys, 'let us give him some Molière. Let us go into the salon, and do a little of the *Femmes Savantes* which we have been playing.' He played Trissotin as badly as it could be played, but it greatly amused him. Mlle. Dupuis, sister-in-law of la Corneille, who played Martine, pleased me infinitely. She distracted me at times when the great man was speaking, and he did not like it. I remember that one day, when

[1] Voltaire attributed this epigram to Frederick II, and it was printed in Frederick's *Posthumous Works*. But it is also found, with a slight variation, in the *Works* of Chamfort (1825).

his pretty Swiss servants, naked down to the shoulders on account of the heat, were passing by me, or bringing me cream, he stopped speaking, and angrily took their lovely necks in his hands, crying out: 'Neck here, neck there—go to the devil.'

He never said a word to me against Christianity, or against Fénélon. 'I don't like people of bad faith and people who contradict themselves,' he said. 'Only a fool will write formally for or against all religions. What, for instance, is this profession of faith of a Savoyard vicar of Jean Jacques?'

It was the period when he detested Rousseau most, and, at the very moment when he was telling me what a monster Jean Jacques was—that a man like him was not exiled, but banished—someone said to him: 'I believe he is just entering your courtyard.' 'Where is the poor man?' he cried. 'Tell him to come. My arms are open to him. Perhaps he has been expelled from Neuchâtel and the district. Find him for me. Bring him to me. All that I have is his.'

M. de Constant asked him, in my presence, for his *History of Russia.* 'You are a fool,' he said; 'if you want to know anything, take La Combe's. He has not received any decorations or furs.' At that time he was displeased with the Parlement, and, when he met his ass at the garden gate, he used to say: 'After you, please, M. le Président.' His impulsive contempt was frequent and amusing. He mistook a piano-tuner of his niece's for his shoemaker, and, after a good deal of abuse, when the matter was explained, he said, 'Ah, my God, you are a man of talent. I was bringing you to my feet, and now I am at yours.'

A merchant selling hats and shoes suddenly entered the salon. M. de Voltaire (who hated visitors so much that he confessed to me that, in the event of my own visit boring him, he had taken physic, so as to be able to plead illness) darted into his study. The merchant followed him, saying:

'Sir, sir, I am the son of a lady for whom you have written verses.'

'I believe you. I have so often written verse for ladies. Good-day.'

'It is Mme. de Fontaine-Martel.'

'Ah, my dear sir, she was very beautiful. I am at your service'; and he made again for his study.

'Sir, where did you get the fine taste which one observes in your salon? Your château, for instance, is charming. Did you build it?'

Voltaire comes back.

'Yes, yes,' he said. 'I designed everything myself. Look at that staircase. Well?'

'I have come to Switzerland for the pleasure of seeing M. de Haller.' Voltaire goes again toward his study, and the man continues: 'That must have cost you a lot. And what a charming garden.'

'Oh, my gardener is a fool,' says Voltaire, coming back. 'I did everything myself.'

'I believe you. . . . This M. de Haller is a great man. . . .' Voltaire retreats again. 'How long would it take to build a château something like yours?'

Voltaire came back. Indeliberately, they acted for me the prettiest little scene in the world; and M. de Voltaire provided many others, even more humorous, by his vivacity, his moods, and his repentance. At one time he was a man of letters, at another a noble of the Court of Louis XIV, at another one of the most sociable of men.

He was most amusing when he posed as the lord of the manor. He spoke to his officers as if they were Roman ambassadors or princes of the Trojan War. He ennobled everybody. When he wanted to know why they never gave him hare for dinner, instead of asking straight out, he said to an old keeper: 'My friend, do animals no longer emigrate from my estate at Tournay to my estate at Ferney?'

He always wore gray shoes, iron-gray stockings,

badly kept up, a large dimity vest reaching to his knees, a large and long wig, and a small black velvet cap. On Sundays he sometimes put on a handsome reddish-brown coat, with vest and knickerbockers to match; but the vest had broad laps, with gold lace, Burgundian fashion, the lace in loops, with large lace cuffs which came down to the tips of his fingers. That gave one, he said, an air of nobility. He was pleasant with all his neighbours, and made them laugh. He embellished everything he saw and heard. He put certain questions to a certain officer of my regiment, and found him sublime in his answers.

'What is your religion?' Voltaire asked him.

'My parents had me brought up in the Catholic faith.'

'A splendid answer,' says Voltaire. 'He does not say that he is a Catholic.'

All this seems ridiculous to give an account of. It might appear that I am making him look ridiculous. But you should have seen him, animated by his brilliant imagination, scattering wit around with both hands, and taking it from everybody: keen to see and believe the good and the beautiful, firm in his own opinion and winning others to it: referring everything to what he wrote and thought: making everybody who was capable of it talk and think: giving aid to all in misfortune, building houses for poor families, good to all his own people: a generous man to his village, a good and a great man, a combination of both, without which we can neither be one nor the other, for genius gives a wider range to goodness, and goodness makes genius more natural.

Their relations did not end there. In many letters, afterwards, Voltaire confided his thoughts to the great noble, telling him of the little inconveniences of old age, and still showing his

freshness of spirit in his seventy-fifth year. He writes, for instance, in 1764:

Having tried everything, more or less, I have concluded that the patriarch's life is the best. I take care of my flock, good folk as they are, but, thank God, I am not like them, and I would not for the world lead the life of an Abraham, wandering, like a great booby, from Mesopotamia to Palestine, from Palestine to Egypt, from Egypt to Arabia Petræa, on foot or on an ass, with his pretty young wife, black as a mole, about eighty years old or thereabout, and all the kings falling in love with her. . . . I cultivate the earth, in which I will presently lie, and I amuse myself marrying the young girls, having no longer the pastime of being a father myself.

He even ventures on prophecy:

I predict to you what you are already, one of the most amiable men in Europe, and one of the most respectable. I predict that you will introduce good taste and grace into a nation which has hitherto, perhaps, considered that its good qualities were quite enough.

At the death of Louis XV, Ligne must have written him some amusing comments, for Voltaire hastens to reply:

You would make a dead man laugh, dear Prince, with your prelates and your ablutions. I, who am nearer to ablutions than sacraments, am enchanted that you bear me in mind.

In the end the patriarch dedicates a little fable to the great noble:

'Neath an aged oak an aged owl
Plumed itself it genius had:
Inharmonious airs it hummed
In the hollow of the tree.
A lovely swan, with silver neck,
Heard the sound of melody,
And to the owl the song returned.
The dismal bird, they tell us, died
Forthwith in fit of jealousy.
No, lovely swan, the lie's too strong:
Such weakness in the owl was not.
'Twas pleasure wrung his soul from him,
Or weakness made him droop and die.

There are many contradictory things in the character of our Prince, but one of the most disconcerting is the sorrow he felt at the death of his father:

In spite of the prodigious change it made in my situation, the death of my father made me infinitely sad. What hurt me most deeply, and cost me many a tear, was one day when he charged me with a certain business, speaking to me almost for the first time in my life, and said that it concerned me more than him, because . . . That 'because' made me weep.

Nevertheless, I forgot all his harshness in an hour when one recalls only the good things one has seen or heard. I called to mind that he had been brave in war, and had had a distinguished appearance at the Court. I would have loved him tenderly if he had let me.

The sorrow, however, did not last long. Plunging once more into the world and life, in this same year 1776, so fertile in events, Ligne soon forgot Claude Lamoral. He fell in

love with—or became a friend of, we do not know for certain—Eugénie d'Hannetaire, a *liaison* to which we owe the *Letters to Eugénie on the Drama.* The Prince de Ligne made a veritable religion of the theatre, though he did not rise above an honourable mediocrity as a dramatic author. In a later volume we will study his comedies and his ideas on the theatre. Here we will speak only of the comedian D'Hannetaire and the social condition of Brussels in the eighteenth century.

The Belgian provinces were then ruled by Austria, which had confided the government of them to Charles of Lorraine, whom Ligne greatly admired :

> Prince Charles of Lorraine was so good that one saw it even in his anger, if he ever happened to be angry. One day, for instance, when he was hunting, which he took very seriously, he was angry with the crowd of spectators, who interfered with the hunt by running along all the paths of the Belœil forest. He shouted : 'Go to all the devils, gentlemen . . . if you please,' he added, raising his hat to them.

Belgium was so happy under his rule that he is very gratefully remembered there. Social life at Brussels advanced rapidly. The most brilliant spirits of Europe were met there. German ponderousness and French urbanity mingled together. I believe that the Prince de Ligne's imagination was caught more than once

by the dream of turning Brussels into a smaller Paris.

The theatre at Brussels was poorly supplied. D'Hannetaire opened a dramatic-literary salon, and it seems to have been much frequented.[1] All the select members of Brussels society met there, ignoring caste distinctions. D'Azincourt, quoted by Lionnet, says:

> The house was a veritable Athenæum, and one of the most pleasant pastimes there was to play improvised comedies, the subject of which was not told until the moment when it was decided to play them. The Prince de Ligne, sparkling with wit, his head full of Spanish, English, and French authors, was particularly good in his.

But what at once becomes clear, in spite of the manipulation of Eugénie's letters, is that it was the young lady, rather than the art of comedy, which attracted our hero to the D'Hannetaire salon. How long did this *amour* —or very tender friendship—last? No one can say, but not very long. It was probably only from gallantry that, when the *Letters* appeared

[1] Jean Nicolas Servandoni, known as D'Hannetaire, was a descendant of the Servandoni who was decorator to Louis XIV. He was destined for the Church, but exchanged it for comedy. He made his first appearance at Ghent about 1744. Henry Lionnet says that he tried to form a company by luring certain actors from the Marshal de Saxe's company, which landed him in prison, though his pretty wife secured his release. He appeared in Brussels in 1745, then joined the Comédie Française, and finished, in 1776, as head of "The company of ordinary comedians of H.R.H. Prince Charles of Lorraine." He died in 1780.

later, Ligne dedicated them to the young actress. However, this gallantry would not last long, as Mlle. D'Hannetaire married a M. de la Rive, and the aged Prince would not think much about her. The Dresden edition of the book is entitled *Letters to Eulalie.*

On May 7, 1766, the Princesse de Ligne gave birth to Louis Eugène Lamoral. In spite of the new burden and the increasingly precarious state of his fortune, Ligne gave sumptuous feasts at Brussels and Ghent. On March 30th he had a brilliant entertainment at his house. Duke Charles and his sister, "Madame Royale," were invited. To meet them Ligne invited twenty-five of the highest ladies in society, asking each to bring four or five cavaliers. Further, he placarded the town with an announcement that "any of the dregs of the people, male and female," who came masked to his garden would have a good supper and a ball. The Duke and his sister came toward the close of the entertainment. They supped at a table with nine or ten covers. The nobles and ladies who were invited were seated at small tables, not more than four or five to a table. At the same time the garden, which was illuminated, was invaded by several thousand people in masks, who were supplied with food and drink. They danced until five in the morning; and, although the crowd was immense, there was no accident

or disorder, and not the least theft. The Prince, who had great pride of race—especially his own race—was quite willing at certain times to indulge in the large rough cordiality of the Walloon and Fleming.

At one time it seemed to me good, for my own sake and that of the Low Countries [!], to belong to all the confraternities. I succeeded marvellously at these suppers of two to three hundred bourgeois, all good eaters and drinkers, and good folk at that time. There were shooting competitions, with the bow or the arquebus. At Saint Antoine, at Ghent, they competed with cannon. 'God preserve me from winning the prize,' I said to myself, 'or it will cost me the devil.' I aim at least two feet to the left of the white, but my bullet goes to the centre. I am applauded. In spite of my protests, I am carried on their arms. My dear colleagues, throwing up their hats and deafening my ears with Flemish (and therefore inharmonious) cheers, lean on my shoulders. I ask how it is I fired so well, and I am told that the artillery had given this cannon to our brotherhood because it was out of order, and always fired to the right. Still, I was very glad, in spite of all the suppers and drinks I had to give. They gave me the ribbon and medal, two cannons crossed, and there was such gaiety in the town for a week as never was.

There was not a single town that did not give me some mark of attachment. Besides my Confraternity of Mercy at Ath, where I wore a monk's habit like the black penitents of Henry III, I belonged to that of Saint Dorothy, queen or goddess of flowers, at Brussels, and Saint Sebastian and Saint Anthony at Ghent. Namur gave me, and equipped at its own expense, a company of hunters, and these, like all the peasants on my estates, remained loyal Royalists. So did Luxembourg, which had taken the oath at my hands.

CHAPTER IV

TEN YEARS OF TRAVEL

DURING THE next ten years, 1770 to 1780, the events which occurred in the life of the Prince de Ligne were so varied that we will record them without any particular care to connect them in a continuous story.

At Paris again in 1770, Ligne paid a visit to Jean Jacques Rousseau in his attic in the Rue Plâtrière :

When Jean Jacques Rousseau returned from his exile, I went to see him in his attic in the Rue Plâtrière. Even as I mounted the stairs I did not yet know how I should approach him, but, accustomed to rely on my instinct, which has always served me better than reflexion, I went in, and pretended that I had made a mistake. 'What is it ?' said Jean Jacques. 'Pardon,' I said, 'I was looking for M. Rousseau of Toulouse.' 'And I,' he replied, 'am only Rousseau of Geneva.' 'Oh, yes, the great man in herbs. I see. My God, what a lot of herbs and big books. They are better than those people write.'

Rousseau almost smiled, and he showed me some flower—perhaps a periwinkle—and everything there was between the leaves of his folio volumes. I pre-

tended to admire his very common and uninteresting collection. He went on with his work, his nose and spectacles bent on it, without further notice of me. I asked his pardon for my stupidity, and begged him to tell me the address of M. Rousseau of Toulouse; but, lest he should tell me it and give me no further excuse, I added: 'Is it true that you are so clever at copying music?' He found some long note-books, and showed them to me. 'See how neat that is,' he said. He began to talk about the difficulty of the work and his talent for it; much as Sganarelle about the art of making faggots. The respect I had for such a man had made me feel that I would not like this sort of thing to last long. I cast about for some sort of passport or ticket of admission, and I said to him that I believed he had only taken up these two kinds of servile occupation in order to extinguish the fire of his brilliant imagination.

'Alas,' he said, 'the other occupations I took up, in order to instruct myself and others, have done me too much harm.'

I told him the one thing on which I agreed with him in all his works—that I, like himself, believed in the danger of certain historical and literary knowledge when one has not a sufficiently sound judgment to receive it. He at once dropped his music, his periwinkle, and his spectacles, and said things which were, perhaps, superior to anything he had ever written. He went over all the shades of his ideas with a justice which he had lost at times in his solitude, from long brooding and writing. In the end he exclaimed several times: 'Oh, men, men!' I had succeeded well enough to venture to contradict him. I said: 'Those who complain of them are men themselves, and they may be mistaken.' That made him think for a moment. I told him that it was in line with his own advice as to the way of granting and receiving services, and the burden of gratitude when one's benefactors are people

whom one cannot love or esteem. That seemed to please him. I then spoke of the other extreme, ingratitude. He was off like a shot, saying the finest things in the world, though mixed with a few little sophistical maxims, which I had drawn upon myself by saying: 'But what if Hume was in good faith?' He asked if I knew him. I answered that I had had a very spirited conversation with Hume about him, and that the fear of being unjust nearly always made me suspend my judgment.

His ugly serving-woman interrupted us occasionally with tedious questions about his linen or his soup. He answered her gently; he would have ennobled a bit of cheese, if he had talked about it. I did not see that he had the slightest distrust of me. As a matter of fact, I had kept him fully occupied since I entered the room, so as to give him no time to reflect on my visit. At last I reluctantly brought it to a close, and, after a respectful silence, looking into the eyes of the author of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, I left the attic, the home of rats and the sanctuary of genius. He rose, and accompanied me with some sort of interest, but did not ask my name.

He would not have remembered my name, for he had no room for other names than Tacitus, Sallust, or Pliny. But, one day when I was in the company of the Prince de Conti, with the Archbishop of Toulouse, President d'Aligre, and other prelates and parlementarians, I learned that these two classes of corrupt persons intended to do some harm to Jean Jacques, and I wrote him the letter which he, wrongly, gave to someone to read or to copy, and it appeared in the end in all the gazettes.[1] It may be read in Rousseau's

[1] Ligne offered Rousseau a retreat on his estate at Fagnolles, "where there were neither lawyers nor priests, but the finest sheep in the world." The Prince had just been created Count of the Empire of the Westphalian Circle, in virtue of his being lord of the manor of Fagnolles.

works, or in his dialogue with himself, which also is included in his works. He was good enough to think, in his usual way, that the offer of a retreat which I made was a trap which his enemies had got me to set for him. This mania had affected the brain of the poor great man, so impulsive and impatient. But his first step was good. The day after he received my letter he came to thank me. I could hardly believe my ears when M. Rousseau was announced. I could hardly believe my eyes when he entered. Louis XIV was not more flattered at receiving the Siamese Ambassador. The account he gave me of his misfortunes, the portrait of his supposed enemies, the conspiracy of the whole of Europe against him, would have been painful if he had not invested it with all the charm of his eloquence. I tried to draw him out of it and get him back to his rural pastimes. I asked why he, who loved the country so much, had come to live at Paris. He then repeated to me his charming paradoxes about the advantage of writing on liberty when one is confined, of painting the spring while the snow falls. I spoke of Switzerland, and I gave him to understand, without saying so, that I knew Julie and Saint Preux by heart. He seemed to be astonished and flattered. He saw that his *Nouvelle Héloïse* was the only one of his works with which I agreed, and that, although I could be profound, I would not take the trouble. I have never had so much wit (and it was, I believe, the first and last time of my life) as during the eight hours of my two conversations with Jean Jacques. When he told me, definitively, that he meant to wait in Paris for all the decrees of arrest with which the lawyers and clergy threatened him, I indulged in a few rather severe truths about his way of understanding celebrity. I remember saying to him: 'M. Rousseau, the more you hide yourself, the better you are known: the more you live in savagery, the more you become a public man.'

His eyes were like two stars. His genius streamed out in his looks, and electrified me. I remember that in the end I said to him several times, with tears in my eyes: 'Be happy, sir, be happy in spite of yourself. If you will not dwell in the temple which I will build for you in this domain of which I am emperor, where there are neither priests nor lawyers, but the finest sheep in the world, remain in France. If, as I hope, they leave you in peace, sell your works, and buy a pretty little country house near Paris. Keep your doors half open to a few of your admirers, and very soon they will talk about you no longer.'

I do not think that was in his nature, for he would not have remained at Ermenonville if death had not surprised him there. In the end, touched by the impression he had made on me, and convinced of my enthusiasm for him, he expressed more interest and gratitude than he was in the habit of expressing to anybody. And, when he went away, he left in me the void one feels when one awakens after a beautiful dream.

In the course of the same year, 1770, the Prince published his *Mémoire Raisonné sur plusieurs ordres de batailles* (a large quarto work, with maps), and he became friendly with the ex-Jesuit Griffet, who had been a royal preacher before the Society was suppressed. He was then seventy-two years old, and he was brought to the notice of the Prince by his former tutor, M. de la Parte. Both singular men, of very different types, they were in touch for several months, with the most perfect mutual courtesy.

'The mind is quick,' Griffet writes to the Prince, 'for mine flies from here to Belœil at an inconceivable

speed. It has already arrived. It finds there Mme. la Duchesse d'Aremberg. It is delighted to see and hear her, and it follows her at times in those magnificent gardens which she adorns. It then thinks itself in the island of Calypso, save that it does not see about her so large a number of nymphs, even if you bring together the entire chapter of Mons. It enjoys every turn of your conversation. It hears you talk, laugh, joke, and radiate with every possible grace. Is there anything better in the world ? '

About the same time our hero made a new step forward in his military career. He was, successively, promoted to the post of lieutenant-general and colonel of the Walloon regiment of Saxe-Gotha, which then took the name Ligne.

On February 10, 1772, the Prince received from Joseph II (whom he would later accompany on the famous voyage in the Taurid) a letter which shows the affectionate comradeship which the Austrian Emperor extended to him. Literally, it is a letter of condolence on the death of Joseph Wenceslaus, Prince of Lichtenstein, the Prince de Ligne's uncle, who had greatly distinguished himself in the Turkish War (1716–1720) and on the Rhine (1734–1735), and had won the battle of Plaisance, in Italy, on June 16, 1766 :

My Prince, you have lost a father rather than an uncle. We have lost the most devoted and worthy of servants, and the State a citizen. . . . As to you, my Prince, there is only my esteem and friendship that I can offer, and your character has long deserved it. Adieu ! If sovereigns were susceptible of gratitude

every day, and could give the rein to their sentiments, their office would not be a burden; but our duties can so rarely be harmonized with our sentiments that, in spite of this good step, I feel the weight.

Ligne has left us a sketch of Joseph II which will, no doubt, be found interesting:

If, to be called great, it were enough to be incapable of littleness, we could call him Joseph the Great; but I know that the title demands more than that. It demands a glorious, brilliant, happy reign, distinguished exploits in war, unexpected enterprises, superb results, perhaps great festivals, pleasures, magnificence. I can no more flatter after death than during life. Circumstances refused Joseph II brilliant opportunities to prove his qualities. He could not be a great man, but he was a great prince, the first amongst the first. He did not surrender himself either to love or friendship, perhaps because he felt himself too strongly drawn thereto. He was restrained in his confidence, because he saw other sovereigns deceived by their mistresses, confessors, ministers, or friends. He was restrained in indulgence, because he wished above all to be just. He was severe in spite of himself, thinking that he was merely exact. Possibly one could win his heart without deserving it, but one could be always sure of his esteem. He dreaded to be thought partial in the distribution of favours. He granted them without any amiability, and refused them without sentiment. He demanded more nobility on the part of the nobles, and he despised them more than any other class when they had it not; but it is false that he wished to wrong them. He wanted the highest authority, so that others should have no right to do evil. He deprived himself of all the pleasures of life in order to get others to work. Idleness he detested above all things. He was displeased for a moment

when anyone made a somewhat piquant remark or reply. He would rub his hands, then come back to hear, to reply, to discuss, as if it were nothing.

He was zealous for the good of the State, and personally generous, indeed beneficent. He knew how to play the sovereign, and he kept his court strictly when it was absolutely necessary. He then gave his court, which for the rest of the year had the appearance of a convent or a barracks, the pomp and dignity of the palace of Maria Theresa. His education had been, like that of so many sovereigns, neglected by the very way in which it had been conducted. They are taught everything except what they ought to know.

In his youth Joseph II showed no promise of being amiable. He became amiable suddenly, after his coronation at Frankfort. His travels and campaigns, and the society of certain distinguished ladies, finished his education. He loved confidences, and was discreet, though he moved everywhere. His ways were very pleasant, and always devoid of pedantry. I have seen him write on one of the large cards he always had in his pocket counsels of gentleness, morality, and obedience for a young girl who wanted to leave an exasperating mother. I have seen him write musical advice for another, as he had been present at her lesson, and was not pleased with her teacher. He used to inquire if people were displeased with him for something he had done, and take pains to return to favour. He would double the charm of his conversation and his gallantry toward women. He would bring chairs for them, open the door, close the window. His politeness was a safeguard against familiarity. He fully recognized fine shades of distinction. He had not the sort of affability of which so many other sovereigns make a trade, as if it were a mark of their superiority. Indeed, he hid that which he had in many respects. He told stories gaily, and with much natural wit.

He had no taste for drinking, eating, amusement, or

reading anything but State papers. He governed too much, and did not reign sufficiently. He made his own music every day. He rose at seven, and while he dressed, he often laughed and, without familiarity, made his chamberlain, surgeon, and other servants laugh. They worshipped him. From eight to noon he visited his chancellories, where he dictated, wrote, and corrected everything himself. In the evening he went to the theatre.

Passing from his room to his study, he would encounter twenty, thirty, or even a hundred ill-clad men and women of the poorer class. He would take their petitions, talk to them, soothe them, and reply, in writing or verbally, at the same hour on the following day. When he found their complaints untrue, he kept silent about them. He wrote badly except when he very much wanted to write. His sentences were long and diffuse. He knew four languages thoroughly, and two others fairly well.

His memory, cultivated when he was a boy, improved, for he never forgot a word, a person, or a piece of business. He used to walk in his room with the person to whom he was granting an audience, talking almost effusively, with a smile, to him. He would take his arm, and then seem to repent it and become serious. At times he would stop to put a log on the fire, or look for his glasses, or go to the window. He never broke his word, and he despised what was said about him. He alarmed the Pope, the Grand Turk, the Empire, Hungary, Prussia, and the Netherlands. The dread of being unjust and of making people unhappy by his military action often suspended his projects, which were almost always the outcome of his first impulse.

The restlessness of his reign must be attributed to the agitation of the blood of Joseph II. He never finished or polished a single one of his works ; and his great fault was to sketch everything, good or evil.

In tracing a life so full of movement and variety as that of the Prince de Ligne, one has to pass continually from the comic to the serious, and from the serious to the comic. We must not, therefore, be charged with a lack of unity.

At the beginning of 1773 a sort of small scandal occurs in connection with a voyage of the Prince to Holland. The Abbé Villette writes to tell Van den Broucke of the unpleasant rumours that are abroad in regard to their master. "The court and the city have been talking all day about it. It is a question of the Prince and a girl." Without admitting his motives, our great man has told us, in his usual manner, the details of what he calls "my assassination in Holland."

How can I like republics? . . . I have been stoned in Switzerland for a stroke with a whip which one of my men gave a carter who incommoded me near Schaffhausen; and I have been assassinated, beaten, dragged in the dust in Holland, all on account of a blow with a stick that a miserable Polish prince gave, without my knowledge, to a coachman who pressed us too close to the wall.

As I came away from a musical party, the first of a dozen of us who were there, a man came up to me. Two others stood beside me, and a fourth at the back of me. I broke my stick on the head of the first, but the others broke their little police-sabres on my body. I was taken off, but recaptured by one of my travelling companions, who wounded one of the officers, whom I had taken for thieves. As I was quite sure that I had done nothing to bring me into trouble with the administration of justice at Amsterdam, I threw a

score of ducats to those who found me leaning against a wall, worn out with my first fight.

I soon find myself fighting another with my fists, but I quickly succumb. My hands are bound. I am loaded with irons, dragged by horses, often near the canal, where anchored boats deprived them of the pleasure of seeing the leap I would make into the water. I say to them, in a sort of Dutch which fear and need taught me at the moment, that I am a relative of the Prince of Orange. They redouble their blows on my head, arms and legs, with the same little police-sabres; and, lifting me up, while others open an iron door, they throw me into a hole in which I dare not move, thinking it to be a den of thieves, and imagining that there would be a trap-door to let me down into one of the canals.

I only discovered the kind of brigands I had fallen amongst when, with the rattle of a hundred keys, they opened the door and confronted me with the man who had been wounded. Not far away I heard them open another dungeon in which they had put a Frenchman who had been with me. The wounded man recognized him, and he acknowledged that he had done it. 'How came you to be wounded yourself?' he was asked. His arm was bound up in linen, and I could not help laughing when he said: 'With a weapon which a man of honour never mentions.'

They took both of us to a sort of small guard-house, as miserable as the judge in a large black wig who sat in it. When he asked me my name, I nearly tore his wig off. I knocked off his hat, and said: 'You scoundrel, this is the way I begin in telling it to you.' Then, pushing toward the door a dozen of these policemen who surrounded me, I found an incredible strength in my anger, and Dutch enough to say to them: 'You vile assassins! My name once made your infamous Republic tremble. Write that, you blackguards.'

My agreeable manner made an impression. The

captain of the civil guard and the judge were discussing whether they should release me, when my good host arrived to claim me, having heard what had happened. There had been a general alarm, for there were more than four hundred of these scoundrels to take three of us, separated from each other, who had defended ourselves, and eight or nine who let themselves be led like lambs to prison.

I went to lodge a complaint with a high official. He received me like a dog, and I treated him in the same fashion. I very nearly spoiled the whole business, which had really turned out very well for us. I was told that some of the men would be dismissed and others punished. They made excuses to me. For my part, I got myself attended to, and swore that I would never enter the cursed country again.

On July 17, 1773, was born the Prince's daughter, Euphémie Christine, who married Count Palfy, a Hungarian noble.

We have already said that the Prince took advantage of every imaginable pretext for going to Paris or Versailles. From 1760 to 1774 we find him ten times in France. Nevertheless, at the death of Louis XV he refrained from appearing at the court, believing that he was involved in the general disgrace. In 1776, however, he, at the invitation of the Comte d'Artois, returned in triumph. Again we will let Ligne himself tell the story ; and, indeed, the following pages, describing the court of Marie Antoinette, are amongst his best :

When Louis XV was dying, the courtesans of Mme.

du Barry abandoned her, as was the custom; and I, who had neglected her for five or six years, would not leave her. I said to her famous brother-in-law, the *roué* Du Barry: The farce is over; we may go.' He replied, in his funny provincial accent: 'Why should I go? If they do anything to me, I'll turn the kingdom into a republic.' That sounded like a piece of braggadocio, yet it happens to have been realized by men who were looser, and less spiritual, than he.

Who could see the unfortunate Queen [Marie Antoinette] every day and not worship her? I did not clearly realize her qualities until she said to me: 'My mother does not like you to be so long at Versailles. Go and spend a few days with your regiment; and send letters to Vienna, so that they will know that you are there.' This thoughtfulness and delicacy, and still more the idea of passing a fortnight without seeing her, made me weep; though the pretty coldness she had at that time, which kept her miles away from gallantry, prevented her from perceiving it. As I do not believe in passions which one knows can never be reciprocal, a fortnight cured me of what I here confess to myself for the first time, and what I would never have confessed to anybody else for fear of being ridiculed.

Consider how this sentiment, which succeeded to the closest friendship, would have animated the charming Queen, if she had had such a sentiment for any man, and with what horror I have heard Paris, and then the whole of Europe, give her as lovers, on the ground of infamous libels, such men as the Duc de Coigny, the Comte d'Artois, M. de Samberti, M. de Fersen, Prince George of Darmstadt, the Duc de Drouet, Mr. Conway, Lord Stratheven, several other Englishmen just as stupid as he, two or three beastly Germans, etc., etc., etc.

Have I ever seen in her society anything that was

not stamped with grace, goodness, and taste? She scented an intriguer at once; she detested every kind of pretension. That is why the whole of the Polignac family and their friends—Valentine Esterhazy, Baron Bezenval, Vaudreuil, and I—were acceptable to her.

One day, when the Queen and the Countess Jules were still very young, and I was teaching them billiards, they started quarrelling and fighting over the question which of them was the stronger. The Queen claimed that she was. 'That is because you are the Queen,' said her friend. 'You are quarrelling,' I said, 'believe me.' 'Well, and if we do quarrel,' said the Queen, 'what will you do?' 'Oh, I shall weep,' said the other; 'but I shall be consoled because you are the Queen.' She proved it by her conduct in more serious days. She detested the court, and she remained there only out of devotion and gratitude. There was never any person more virtuous and disinterested than the members of the Jules family. The Countess Diane was the one who took most pleasure in social life. She might have taken much more. From fear of giving rise to gossip, there was rather too much monotony.

Who would believe that it is a certain person[1] who loved the Queen and the whole Jules family with the same affection who, by a piece of stupidity, gave rise to one of the most odious of the calumnies about the Princess spread amongst the people? At Fontainebleau there was a sudden storm about the *liaison* with Mme. de Polignac. The Chevalier de Luxembourg had a great idea of sending away the Duchess, whose sound little head and excellent heart he feared, and managing the Queen himself. Mme. de Polignac said one day to the Queen: 'We do not yet love each other enough to be unhappy if we are separated. But I feel that we are getting to that point; very soon I shall not be able to leave you. Let us anticipate. Let me leave

[1] The Comte d'Artois.

Fontainebleau. I was not made for court life. Everybody here knows too much for me.' The horses were brought out. The Queen embraced her, conjured her, fell on her neck. The door was half open, and this certain person saw the spectacle. He laughed, and went out, saying: 'Don't let me disturb you.' And he told everybody how he had disturbed the two friends.

The King, of whom I had expectations of merit occasionally, whom I protected, so to say, trying, by interesting conversation, to lift his soul above his buffoonery and his hunting, liked to play practical jokes. It was generally on Conflans, the Coigny, and the friend of the Jules—that is to say, the Polignacs, whom I always call by that name in spite of their duchy, of which they thought little.

The Queen succeeded in correcting this habit. It was at his *couchers* that His Majesty liked to torment us. But he had a certain tact in the midst of these vulgar tricks. One day, when he threatened us with his *cordon bleu*, trying to catch those of us who, like myself, wore ear-rings, the Duc de Laval left the room. He said to him: 'Don't be afraid; it does not concern you.' Another day, when he nearly strangled me with his rough play, I got rather angry, and said: 'The King touches me. God cure me!' That lasted only a year or two; and often, in public, he gave marks of esteem to those who deserved them. I have seen him more than once sharply reprimand people who took precedence of me.

Créqui, a great grumbler, said to me one day: 'Would you like to know what these three brothers are? A rough watchmaker, a wit from a provincial café, and an idler from the boulevards.' The two latter titles were the caricature of Monsieur, who had a good memory and plenty of knowledge, and was very fluent at quotation, and of the Comte d'Artois, who prided himself on his figure, and posed as the handsome French Prince—which suited him very well, for he had just

as much grace and goodness as confidence in his demeanour. I have had the pleasure of often being obstinate with sovereigns, who are apt to be at times despotic in their jokes. The Comte d'Artois, at Fontainebleau, wanted to make me go with him to hunt boars. 'To-morrow morning at seven,' he said. 'No, monseigneur,' I said. 'In the first place, it is too early, and then, the Queen wants me to ride with her to the Croix de Toulouse.' 'You shall not.' 'I will, all the same.' 'You will come with me.' 'No, monseigneur.' 'I give you my word of honour.' 'And I give mine that I won't come.'

Next morning, at six o'clock, there is a great row at my door. The young Prince attacks it, and I defend it. He summons our common friends, and I barricade it. He breaks in, drags me out of bed, chants his victory, dresses me with his own hands, and carries me nearly to the horse that is waiting for me. But as he is mounting his horse, seeing that I have my foot in the stirrup, I escape. He follows me, but I hide, and he passes me. I do not know where I am going. I go through the royal kitchen, where a score of scullions with their saucepans pursue me, thinking that I have come to try to poison the King. I rush through a group of porters, who take me for an assassin, and they come after me with the poles of their chairs.

At last I get away, and have time to look round. I make my way to the theatre, and hide behind a stack of scenery, but I am discovered by a group of workmen. The Comte d'Artois finds me there, gets hold of my feet, and tries to drag me out of my hiding-place. I get my feet out of his hands, break away on the other side, and, in trying to clear the wings, I tear my right cheek on a devil of a nail, and bleed furiously. The Prince is desolate. He consoles and embraces me a hundred times, and goes off to hunt his boars. I put plenty of salt in my wound, I wash it with brandy, I bind it with my handkerchief, and

I seek the Queen, who is waiting for me, and ride with her. Thus, though I suffered much, for it was terribly cold, I kept my word of honour.

It was during these rides, alone with the Queen, though with the royal retinue about us, that she told me a thousand interesting little stories about herself, and all the traps that were laid to give her a lover. At one time it was the N—— H——s, who wanted her to take a viscount of their family. At another time the Choiseul cabal chose Biron for her. He was at that time virtuous, but since . . . Sometimes the Duchesse de Duras rode with us; but we left her with the grooms, and that was one of the follies and chief crimes of the Queen, for she never did any other except by thoughtlessness in regard to the bores, men and women, who are always vindictive.

These rides in the Bois de Boulogne and at Verrières, apart from the hunt, were so pleasant that there was a good deal of jealousy. Envy spoiled also our charming and innocent nights on the terrace at Versailles, which were like nights at the Opera. We listened to the conversation and exchanged opinions. I gave my arm to the Queen, whose gaiety was charming. Sometimes we had music in the groves of the orangery, where there is a bust of Louis XIV in a niche high overhead. The Comte d'Artois used to say to it sometimes: 'Good evening, grandpa.' One evening I made up my mind, in collusion with the Queen, to get behind the statue and reply to him; but I feared they would not give me a ladder to come down, and leave me there all night, and this led me to abandon the plan. Very often there was more court intrigue than friendly fun in these things; the Duc de Guignes was much more inclined to the former than the latter. He sometimes gave his arm to Madame and to the Comtesse d'Artois. Various reasons and accidents put an end to this pastime eventually. Apparently, it has been said, one can never amuse oneself at a court.

Then we had balls in the Salle de la Comédie at Versailles, attended only by the royal family and the company of Mlle. de Montansier. It was found that the company was too good and too bad; although we had with us the whole of the members of the household of the King and the Princes. A masked man addressed verses to the Queen. What was not a story at all became one. So another pleasure was reformed.

After that, the Queen, who was no longer young, thought that she could enjoy balls at the Opera as safely as the poorest woman in the kingdom. She was not more fortunate than in other matters. As a matter of fact, I could say that, beginning with the death of five or six hundred people on the day of her marriage, I never saw her have a completely happy day. The balls at the Opera were merely the signal for a new persecution. The Queen, in order not to be recognized, as she always was by us, and even by the French who saw least of her, spoke to strangers, to pique their curiosity. Hence a thousand stories about English, Russian, Swedish, and Polish lovers.

I did not like her to go there, partly on that account, and partly because of the morrow. It was only then that she was tiresome; she had so much to say about the people, and what they said and what she said, that it was intolerable.

It was very charming to catch the Queen, very pleasant to set little traps to embarrass her. If one put a free or loose interpretation on anything she said, she was angry, then she laughed, and was more amiable than ever. One day a lady of the court, whose lover was an officer in the Guard, gave her a ball. She asked that the orchestra should begin with a lively tune, and I advised her to demand the one of which the opening words are

In the French Guard
I had a love . . .

I took the risk, because at court, where everybody is always in a state of intoxication, no one is cool enough to think of applying things. I would have been very sorry to cause any trouble to this lady and the Queen. I alarmed her, and amused myself; and that was enough.

Once I found myself in trouble with the Queen without knowing it, on account of some joke I had permitted myself—so she said afterwards—about the Emperor or the Queen of Naples. I took my stand behind her chair, as usual, at the Princesse de Lamballe's house, with my usual confidence that no one could be angry with me. She did not speak to me; but I thought that meant that it was all right. When I spoke to her, she replied coldly. I did not notice it, but Mme. de Lamballe called my attention to it after the game. She was more troubled about it than I; and, as she was as good as she was pretty, she promised to find out the reason. She told me the next day, and, as there was a ball at Paris, I hoped to have an explanation with the Queen. She saw that I had been very distressed all day; for her goodness, amiability, grace, and the charm of her society had kept me away from Paris for several years. I do not quite know how it happened. The Queen told Mme. de Simiane something about our quarrel, and said that she must pass herself off on me as the Queen. She said, as she went away, that I would be a good subject.

I fell into the trap. Mme. de Simiane showed me her beautiful hands—though they were not so beautiful as the Queen's. They were her letters of credit. I was deeply moved, and wept, I believe. I defended myself with great heat. She said that we would go on as before. I said that one could never trust kings and queens, and that I feared she might do the same again to-morrow, and asked her to pinch the end of her right ear every time I did the same during the

spectacle at Versailles, where I always stood underneath her apartments. I nearly pinched my ear off, but the Queen never touched hers. I had an opportunity to speak to her on leaving. She thought I had gone mad, and it made her laugh so much that she forgot her anger, which, moreover, had never been very great. From gaiety it is only a single step to forgiveness. Those who laugh always forgive; above all, a charming young Queen.

It has been very justly said that this portrait of Marie Antoinette is very flattering. Doubtless it is, but we have not here to seek the causes of the flattery. Let us just recognize the touching grace with which Ligne speaks of an exquisite woman. He may very well have been in love with her, without losing sight of the reserves which his position at the court led him to impose upon himself.

In 1775, the Prince had married his elder daughter to Prince Clary. She was very much esteemed, and is spoken of as an intelligent and good woman.

Two years later, yielding to some inferior impulse of courtesanship, Ligne consented to receive on his estate at Hainaut a mistress of Frederick William, the Crown Prince of Prussia. "The letter you sealed yesterday to the Crown Prince of Prussia," he writes to Van den Broucke, "is in reply to one he wrote me asking me to give hospitality to a lady with whom he is madly in love." He was really more bored than pleased

with the service he rendered, and he at once began to dread gossip. "As I do not want to see her, and it would cause talking at Belœil or Baudour, I prefer to have her and her sister, under false names, at Antoing." He was afterwards disturbed to think of the kind of lodging, though not uncomfortable, that the lady might be in, while he sheltered himself from gossip.

Then war seemed about to break out between Prussia and Austria. Maximilian Joseph, Elector of Bavaria, died on December 30, 1777, and his State fell to the Elector Palatine. But Joseph II, without taking time to consult anybody, decided to seize Bavaria, and marched against it at the head of his army. Prussia, much concerned, upheld the Duke of Zweibruggen in the German Diet. The Elector of Saxony was drawn in. Joseph and Frederick encamped with their troops, one in Bohemia, the other in Silesia. But, while Joseph II was eager to fight, his mother, Maria Theresa, sought to prevent him.

The Austrian army was divided into two corps, of which one was commanded by Marshal Laudon and the other by Marshal de Lacy. Ligne, who belonged to the former, was in camp with his grenadiers near Bezesnov, while his son Charles, trained in the Metz school of artillery, made entrenchments on the Elbe, aided by the genius of Laudon.

The chronicle of the time is feebly supplied

with a few "very pretty, small, and amusing affairs," as Ligne says. On April 10, 1779, peace negotiations began at Teschen, and they were concluded on May 13th. The war and the ensuing peace displeased everybody, beginning, of course, with the Prince. He had led the attack on Mount Pozig and dislodged the enemy, and a captured Prussian hussar was brought to him.

"I believe it was you who fired at me," said the Prince.

"It may be," said the hussar; "I am sorry, Prince, but clearly it was not your place where I fired on you."

"Good," said the Prince. "You did your duty better than I." Of the peace he says:

I was not the only one that disliked it. The Empress was displeased because peace was concluded too soon; the Emperor because it was concluded without his knowledge; Marshal de Lacy because it upset his plan, which, if it had been followed, would have been much more profitable; the King of Prussia because he had expended twenty-five million crowns and twenty-five thousand men, and got nothing of what he wanted; Prince Henry because the King had opposed him.

From his headquarters at Bezesnov the Prince wrote to his son on June 26, 1778:

Well, my engineer, you are still fortifying your position, and not fortifying yourself in your considera-

tion for the genius of our genius. I find it very hard for my part to fortify myself against being bored.

The Emperor has come here to make what one may very well call trouble. He says that he 'wants the war,' but does not believe in it. 'Who'll bet?' he asked us the other day. 'Everybody,' replied Marshal Laudon, still in a bad temper. 'Everybody means nobody.' 'Well, I will,' said Marshal Lacy. 'How much?' asks the Emperor, who was thinking of something like a score of ducats. 'Two hundred thousand florins,' says the Marshal. The Emperor pulled a diabolical face. He felt that it was a lesson in public.

He was very nice with me. He is always afraid of people playing the doctor with him. He was very pleased with my troops, and said many nice things about you, my dear Charles. He has seen you work marvellously. He is now off. I can see him from my window.

I laugh at myself and the others when I reflect that, though I am not appreciated, I know I am worth more than they think. I drill every company myself. I shout myself hoarse with commanding six battalions at once. There is not a miserable hut with four soldiers in that I do not visit, to taste their soup and bread, weigh their meat, and see that no one cheats them. There is not one to whom I do not speak, and send vegetables and other things; not an officer who does not dine with me and whom I do not try to electrify for the good of the war. My colleagues do nothing of the sort; and they are wise, for no one thinks any the worse of them. Not one of them troubles about the war. They use the most pacific language to young officers whom they ought to train to be good and zealous generals. All right. They will be generals before I am, and that also will be all right.

I have not spoken French for six weeks. On the other hand, to repay me for a tiresome dinner, they

draw up thirty pairs of feet at a time, as I leave the room, to indicate respect. If an infantry officer may salute an engineer officer, and one on active service, I embrace you, my son. I am charmed that you obtain credit for bad work. Good-bye, my excellent work. Good-bye, my masterpiece, almost like Christine.

I just hear that the Marshal, on St. John's Day, asked the Emperor what reply he had given to the letter he had just received from the King of Prussia. 'I have,' he said, 'buried it at the foot of the wall. I reminded him that the season was advancing, and that I wanted lessons from so great a master. When, my dear Marshal, do you think I shall have an answer?' The Marshal counted on his fingers, and said: 'In a week, Your Majesty; and he will bring it himself.'

I hear now that he is entering Bohemia. It is July 5th. It was a good guess. So much the better. I have orders to march with my whole corps.

Frederick presently appeared with his advance guard at Nachool, in front of the Austrians. On July 2nd the Prince writes:

As I think you have not yet got back from Pardulitz to your army, I must give you some news of it. A report was made to the Emperor that the King was advancing with I do not know how many columns. He rode at full speed to Number 7 Redoubt, and asked a score of times: 'Where is the Marshal?' The Marshal came on foot, for the first time in his life. 'I have been looking everywhere for you, Field-Marshal.' 'Well, sire, there's the King.' 'Lend me your glass. Ah, there he is in person, I believe! On a big English horse, his Anhalt, perhaps. Do you see him?' 'Maybe; but they will not attack us alone. Look at the strength of their columns. Oh, there's

one composed of at least ten thousand men. And others.' 'They are going to attack us, then?' 'Perhaps. What time is it?' 'Eleven o'clock.' 'It will take them two hours to form up. Then they will have their dinner—and we also. They will not attack Your Majesty to-day.' 'No; but to-morrow?' 'To-morrow! I think not; nor the day after to-morrow, nor any other day.'

You will recognize the cold, and rather bitter, way of our good Marshal, annoyed because they want to interfere every hour in his business, and the uncomfortable position of the Emperor, who feels at such times that all this is beyond him.

The war opened, however, but rather in theory than reality. For nine months there were merely unimportant advance-post engagements between the two armies. Ligne continued to curse this pacific war. His son, Prince Charles, had joined him on July 30th, at Mickenhof:

Charles takes to fire marvellously. I cannot restrain his ardour. He has a presence of mind, yet a spirit, which encourage everybody.

The father seems to have been as ardent as the son, but he is no longer free to show it:

Nothing ever gave me so much pain as seeing these fine excellent Lycaniens stretched side by side, saying such touching things to me and their lieutenant. Formerly, when I had people killed, which I might at times have avoided, I shared the danger, and it had not the same effect on me. But I had sent these poor beggars, and, as I could not be everywhere, and felt that it was best for me to be where I was, I saw that

it is often hard to be a general officer, because you are obliged to have others killed without being in the fight yourself.

Rather revolutionary language for a superior officer.

The war closed, and we pass to Hélène Massalska, wife of the Prince's son Charles. She would, indeed, deserve a whole chapter for her qualities, the part she played in the Ligne family, and the numerous adventures of her life. We must, however, refer the reader to Mme. Lucie Herpin's (Lucien Perrey) *Histoire d'une grande dame au XVIII^e siècle*; which critics have reproached with excess of imagination, without mentioning the very pleasant and truthful picture of a bygone age which the work contains. Here we will say little on the subject.

Hélène Massalska, who was to become Princesse de Ligne, and later Helena Potocka, became an orphan at an early age, and was entrusted to her uncle, Prince Ignatius Massalski, Bishop of Vilna, son of Prince Massalski, Grand General of Lithuania. "A fool of a bishop," says Ligne, "since hanged." He was compromised in Polish affairs, and, after several flights, was executed. She was sent early to France, and placed under the care of Mme. Geoffrin at the Abbaye au Bois, which she did not leave until the time of her marriage. After refusing the hand of the Duc d'Elbeuf, Prince de Vaudemont,

son of the Comtesse de la Brionne and Count Charles Louis de Lorraine, and then that of the Prince de Salm—for reasons which were not very solid, and, in fact, slightly ridiculous—the young lady deigned to accept the homage of Charles de Ligne, without, however, giving him much hope. The young Charles, on his side, was much occupied with an old passion, and seemed to have little desire for the contracting of this marriage, beyond a feeling of deference to his father. Not long out of the military school at Strassburg, and, as we saw, now in the service of Austria, Charles wrote to his aunt, the Princesse de Ligne-Luxembourg, who wanted the marriage : " The young person seems to me rather decided, and not very delicate in her choice, since she preferred Prince Frederick de Salm, who has such a bad reputation."

A letter of Mme. de Pully confirms the young man's opinion : " The young person is infatuated with M. de Salm. He has near her some emissary whom we do not know, and this agent destroys in advance everything that can be said against him. Even the Comte de Horn, who is much respected, has been forgotten."

However, after many vicissitudes, the matter was arranged. Hélène demanded only that she should live at Paris. The clause was accepted, with certain modifications, and, on July 25, 1779, the King signed the contract. The marriage was

celebrated at the Abbaye au Bois four days later. It was a splendid ceremony. Hélène charmed all who were present, especially her father-in-law, "by her becoming and respectful attitude." The Princesse de Ligne thought her daughter-in-law charming. "Our child is charming, gentle and docile, with no will of her own, amused at everything—in fact, everything one could wish if one had to make a daughter-in-law. She has succeeded very well with all who have seen her in this country."

Certainly no one could then discern in the little schoolgirl the ardent temperament and admirably feminine egoism of the future Countess Helena Potocka. Charles Joseph, usually so penetrating, was the first dupe. He gave a splendid festival in her honour at Belœil. On September 10th he wrote to his son at Versailles :

'Isn't it funny to be married, my dear Charles ? You will get on all right with it. We are married more or less, according to the circumstances. It is only fools who cannot adapt themselves to it. Meantime, you have a very pretty wife, who could be your mistress without dishonouring you. I am not moral or moralist enough to preach, yet I despise all who do not believe in morality ; but it consists in making everybody about one happy. I am sure that is also what you think. Without having a regiment of principles that is one of the four or five I have for the second education. As to the first, I told you : to be a liar and coward would make me die of shame. Assuredly, my boy, you have followed that lesson

well. . . . I have already in mind a grove for my Charles, a fountain that shall have the name Hélêne, and a cradle for their children.'

We shall meet Charles and his young wife again a little later.

In 1780, some writers say, the Prince set up a complete printing-press in his château at Belœil and at Brussels. They base the statement on the title-pages of some of the Prince's works, but it is possible the Brussels publisher Hayez brought out some, or all, of these books (mostly comedies and verse). They were not put on the market, and for this reason, and because of the name of Ligne as his own printer, they may have escaped the censor. So Wauters thinks, but the documents discovered by M. Leuridant show beyond question that there was a press at Belœil. As to the censor, such works as the comedy *Colette et Lucas* and the *Coup d'œil sur Belœil* would not fear him; and for the others, Ligne had already evaded the difficulty without needing to say that they were printed at his château.

CHAPTER V

WITH FREDERICK II AND CATHERINE THE GREAT

In 1780, after a brief stay in Paris, Ligne suddenly set out on a tour of Europe:

I started in June 1780 for Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Warsaw, and Cracow, where I had business; and for Mogylany, Léopol, and Brunn, where I was in love. I nearly forgot to say that it was from Paris and the rue Bourbon, from the house of the Duchesse de Polignac, who had just had a baby, and at whose table I had dined with the Queen, that I set out. I promised them that I would return at the same hour, six months later, and I arranged accordingly for my coach and hired lackey.

The chief object of the voyage was money, as Hélène's uncle, the Bishop of Vilna, sent more paper than coin; and the "fool of a bishop" had promised to obtain naturalization for Ligne and his son from the Polish Diet. At Vienna the Prince did not stop. Taking advantage of the fact that since the Bavarian War of Succession passports were needed by Austrian officers in

Prussia, Ligne who was most eager to know Frederick the Great, wrote to him for the necessary authorization :

The King began, without reflecting why, by forbidding Austrian officers to set foot in his dominions without express permission signed by his own hand. Our court similarly forbade Prussian officers, and there was a good deal of unreasonable inconvenience on both sides. I am a confident man. I thought I had no need to obtain permission. It was the desire to have a letter from Frederick the Great rather than the fear of being badly received that moved me to write him. My letter glowed with my enthusiasm, and my admiration of that sublime and extraordinary man, and I had three charming replies from him. He gave me in detail almost what I had given him in outline, and what he could not give me in the way of admiration, as I do not remember having won a battle, he gave me in friendship. For fear of missing me, he had written me, from Potsdam, to Vienna, Dresden, and Berlin. While I waited at midday, to be presented to him with my son Charles and M. de Lille, I saw the parade; and I was presently surrounded and escorted to the palace by Austrian deserters, especially of my regiment, who almost embraced me, asking pardon for having abandoned me.

The hour came for me to be presented, and the King received me with ineffable charm. The military coldness of military headquarters gave way to a tender and benevolent welcome. He said that he did not know I had so tall a son.

'He is, in fact, married, Sire, for the past year.'

'May I venture to ask to whom?' (He often used this phrase, and: 'If you will permit me to have the honour to say to you.')

'To a Pole, a Massalska.'

'What! A Massalska? Do you know what her grandmother did?'

'No, Sire,' said Charles.

'She fired a cannon at the siege of Dantzig. She made them go on firing when her party, which had lost its head, wanted to give in.'

'Women are indefinable,' I said. 'Strong and weak, indiscreet, dissimulating, they are capable of anything.'

'Quite so,' said M. de Lille, who was vexed at being left out of the conversation. 'Look here . . .'

The King interrupted him. I quoted a few characteristics in support of my opinion, like that of the woman Hachette at the siege of Amiens. The King made a brief reference to Rome and Sparta. He liked those fields. After a moment's silence, I said to the King, in order to please M. de Lille, that Voltaire had died in his arms. That caused the King to ask him a number of questions. He replied at too great length, and went away. Charles and I remained to dinner.

For five hours every day the encyclopædic conversation of the King enchanted me. Fine arts, war, medicine, letters, religion, philosophy, morals, history, and legislation were discussed in turns. The glorious ages of Augustus and Louis XIV: the fine society of the Romans, Greeks, and French: the chivalry of Francis I, the frankness and courage of Henry IV: the Renascence of letters and their evolution since Leo X: anecdotes on the great minds of earlier days, and their discomforts: the vagaries of Voltaire, the susceptible spirit of Maupertuis, the agreeableness of Algarotte, the great ability of Jordan, the hypochondria of the Marquis d'Argens, whom the King used to send to bed for two days, telling him curtly that he had a sour face. We discussed everything of interest, and his pleasant tone of voice, rather deep, with an agreeable movement of the lips, gave his words an

inexpressible grace. That is, I think, why people did not notice that he was, like Homer's heroes, a bit of a babbler, but sublime. The voice and noise and gestures of talkers have a good deal to do with their reputation, for one could certainly not find a greater talker than the King; yet one was charmed that he was such. Accustomed to talk to the Marquis de Lucchesini, in the presence of four or five generals who did not know French, he took his revenge thus for his hours of work, reading, brooding, and solitude.

It is, I said to myself, about time I said something. He had just mentioned Virgil:

'What a fine poet, Sire, and what a bad gardener!'

'To whom are you talking?' said the King. 'Have I not myself planted, sown, and dug, with the *Georgics* in my hand? My man said to me: "But that is silly, Sir, and your book is silly. That isn't the way to do it." My God, what a climate. God or the sun refuses me everything. Look at my poor oranges, lemons, and olives. They are dying of hunger.'

'It is only laurels that you grow well, Sire, apparently,' I said. The King looked at me very pleasantly, and, to cover the insipidity with a joke, I added: 'Besides, Sire, there are too many grenadiers in this country. They eat up everything.'

The King laughed, as one laughs at follies. One day I turned over a plate to see what sort of porcelain it was.

'Where do you think it came from?' he asked.

'I believe it is Saxon. But instead of two swords, I see only one, which is just as good.'

'It is a sceptre.'

'I beg Your Majesty's pardon, but it looks so like a sword that one can easily mistake it.'

That is quite true. It is the stamp of Berlin porcelain. As the King sometimes played the King, and as he occasionally thought himself very magnificent when he took a stick and a box with a few ugly little

diamonds, which straggled over it, I am not sure whether my little allegory pleased him too much. One day when I reached the palace, he came to me and said:

'I tremble to give you some bad news. I have just heard that Prince Charles of Lorraine is dangerously ill.'

He looked at me, to see what impression that made on me, and, seeing tears in my eyes, he very tactfully changed the subject. He spoke of the war and Marshal de Lacy. He asked news of him, and said:

'He is a man of great distinction. Mercy, amongst your people, and formerly Puységur amongst the French, had ideas about marching and camping. We learn from the *Castramentation* of Hyginus that the Greeks also gave much attention to the subject. But your Marshal is better than the ancients, the moderns, and the highest authorities. All the time he was at your headquarters, if you will permit me to recall it, I had not the smallest advantage. Do you remember the two campaigns of 1758 and 1759? We succeeded in everything. I often said to myself: Will I never get rid of this man? He ought to have been rewarded, and he was. They made him Field-Marshal, and gave him a corps that was too strong to harass me, and too weak to resist me. Nevertheless, he evaded me, and got out of all his difficulties by the campaign of 1760. He was replaced. That is not bad for me, I said. There will be an opportunity. I sought it, and found it at Torgau.'

That was the finest panegyric the King ever pronounced, for he supported it by saying that it was M. de Lacy who had cleared Moravia, Bohemia, Lusace, and Saxony. And the King did not know that I was so attached to him. Moreover, it is not a compliment to quote facts.

Next day the King came to say to me, as soon as he saw me, and with a most penetrating look:

'If one had to tell you of the loss of a man who loved you, and was an honour to the race, it is best that it should be done by someone who feels it as keenly as I. Poor Prince Charles is no more. There may be others to replace him in your heart, but few princes will replace him in the beauty of his soul and his virtues.'

He was deeply moved in saying this. I said: 'Your Majesty's regrets are a consolation to me. You did not wait for his death to speak well of him. There are fine verses about him in the poem on the art of war.' My emotion disturbed me, but I recalled them to him. As a man of letters, he was pleased that I knew them by heart.

'His passage of the Rhine is very fine,' he said, 'but the poor Prince depended on so many people! I have never depended on anything but my own head, and it was sometimes too much for my happiness. He was badly served, and not sufficiently obeyed. Neither ever happened to me. Your General Nadasdy seemed to me a great cavalry general.'

As I did not think so, I was content to say that he was very brilliant and great at firing, and that he would have led his hussars to hell, he could put such spirit into them.

'What has become of a brave colonel who played the devil at Rosbach? Ah, I believe it was the Marquis de Voghera. . . . Yes, that's it, for I asked his name after the battle.'

'He is now a cavalry general.'

'Indeed. There must have been a terrible thirst for fighting to charge on that day, as your two regiments of cuirassiers did; and your hussars also, I think, for the battle was lost before it began.'

'Apropos of M. de Voghera, I wonder if Your Majesty knows what he did before charging. He is a fiery, restless man, always in a hurry, with something of the old chivalry. Seeing that his regiment was not coming up quickly enough, he rode on ahead,

and, getting near to the commander of the Prussian cavalry, whom he hated, he saluted, as on parade. The other returned the salute, and then they fell upon each other like mad dogs.'

'Good. I would like to know that man, and thank him. Was your M. de Ried mad to send the brave dragoons which have borne your name so long, with so much glory, against my three columns?'

He had asked me the same question at the Neustadt camp, and I had told him that it was not M. de Ried; that they were not under his command, that Marshal Daun had no right to send them into the Eilenburg forest, and that they ought not to have been ordered to halt there without sending at least a patrol in advance. The King could not endure our General Ried, who had displeased him when he was minister at Berlin, and he put everything to the account of men he did not like.

'When I think of these diabolical Saxon camps! They are unassailable citadels. If M. de Lacy had still been quartermaster-general at Torgau, I would not have attempted to attack it. But I saw at once that the camp was badly fixed.'

'The high reputation of camps sometimes leads to their being assaulted. For instance—I ask Your Majesty's pardon, but I always thought that you would have attempted that at Plaun, if the war had lasted.'

'Oh, no. There was no chance.'

'Does not Your Majesty think that with a good battery on the Dolschen height, which overlooked us, and several battalions, one behind the other, in the ravine during the night, attacking a quarter of an hour before daybreak, and laying a sort of siege to our camp between Goschutz and Guttersee, where I noticed a score of times that one could have a front of three battalions—does not Your Majesty think that he could have taken this almost invincible battery, our boulevard, and at least our shelter?'

'And your Windberg battery, which would have cut down my poor battalions in the ravine?'

'But during the night, Sire?'

'Oh, we could not spare anybody. That deep hollow from Bourg, and even Potschappel, would have been a gutter for us. You see that I am not as brave as you think.'

The Emperor had set out for his interview with the Empress of Russia. This the King did not like, and, to undo the good it had done us, he had at once sent, rather clumsily, the Crown Prince to St. Petersburg. He felt that the Russian Court might escape his influence. I was in terror lest, in the midst of these amenities, he should remember that I was an Austrian. 'What a change,' I said to myself. 'Not a single epigram on us, on my master.'

One day, at table, the Jewish sophist Pinto said to his neighbour:

'The Emperor is a great traveller. No one ever covered a greater distance.'

'Pardon,' said the King. 'Charles V went to Africa, for he won the battle of Oran there.'

Then, turning to me, though I could not guess whether there was any joke in this, he said:

'The Emperor is more fortunate than Charles XII. Like him, he entered by Mohilow, but it seems to me that he will reach Moscow.'

The same Pinto said one day to the King, when he was puzzled to know whom to send abroad as minister:

'Why do you not think of M. de Lucchesini? He is an able man.'

'That is why I want to keep him,' said the King. 'I would rather send you, or a bore like So-and-so.'

He at once sent him abroad somewhere as minister. M. de Lucchesini knew how to make the best of the King's conversation. He knew what subject pleased him, and he was able to listen: which is not as easy

as many think, and no fool ever knew how to do it. He was just as pleasant with all the others as with the King, and was liked for his seductive manner and his mental elegance. Pinto, who had nothing to risk, ventured on everything.

'Ask the Austrian General, Sire, what he has seen me do when I was in the Emperor's service.'

'Fireworks for my marriage, wasn't it, Pinto?' I said.

'Do me the honour to tell me,' the King interrupted, 'if he succeeded.'

'No, Sire. It alarmed all my relatives, who thought it a bad omen. The major there had had the idea of combining two fiery hearts, a novel image of the married couple. But the screen on which they were to be was lacking. The heart of my wife disappeared, and mine remained.'

'There you are, Pinto. You were no more use to them than you are to me.'

'Oh, Sire,' I said, 'Your Majesty owes him something for the sabre-cuts he has received on the head.'

'He has had plenty,' said the King. 'Pinto, did I not send you some of my good Prussian honey yesterday?'

'Certainly,' said Pinto. 'If Your Majesty could get control of it, you would be the greatest king on earth, for there is nothing but that in your kingdom, and there is plenty.'

'Do you know,' the King asked me one day, 'that I have been in your service? I bore arms first in the Austrian army. My God, how the time flies! [He had a way of clasping his hands when he said, 'My God,' which made him look an extremely good and pious person.] Do you know that I saw the last rays of the glory of Prince Eugene?'

'Perhaps it was in those rays that Your Majesty's genius was lit?'

'Good God, who is equal to Prince Eugene?!

'The one who has done more—the man who has won a dozen battles.'

He put on his modest air—I have always said that this is easy when one has plenty—and pretended not to understand me.

'When,' he said to me, 'the cabal which Prince Eugene always had against him in his army wanted to injure him, they took advantage of the time when his mind, which was fresh in the morning, drooped a little from the fatigue of the day. That is how they got him to undertake his wrong march upon Mayence.'

'Your Majesty can teach me nothing about yourself,' I said. 'I know all that you have done, and said. I could tell you of your journeys to Strassburg and in Holland, and what happened on a boat. Apropos of this campaign on the Rhine, one of our old generals, whom I often induce to talk, just as one reads an old manuscript, told me that he was very much astonished to see a young Prussian officer, whom he did not know, say to a general of the late King, who was giving verbal orders not to forage: 'And I, sir, order you to go. Our cavalry needs it. In a word, I say yes.'

'You put me in too good a light,' said the King. 'Ask these gentlemen. What about my temper and my whims? They will tell you fine things about me.'

We returned to anecdotes that were little known, or were buried in a few works.

'I have been much amused,' I said, 'by the mass of books, true or false, written by refugees, and not known, perhaps, in France.'

'Where did you find those things? That would amuse me in the evenings more than the conversation of a doctor from the Sorbonne whom I have here, and whom I am trying to convert.'

'I found them,' I said, 'in a library in Bohemia which kept up my spirits during two winters.'

'Two winters in Bohemia! What the devil were you doing there? Was it long ago?'

'No, Sire. A year or two ago. I had gone there to read in peace.'

He smiled, and seemed pleased that I did not mention the little war of 1778, of which, I thought, he did not care to speak; and, seeing that it was during my winter quarters that I was in Bohemia, he liked my reticence. As he was an old wizard, who guessed everything, and with the finest tact that ever was, he saw that I did not care to tell him that I found Berlin changed since I was last there. I was careful not to remind him that I was one of those who had taken it in 1760, under the command of M. de Lacy. It was for speaking to him of the other occupation of Berlin, by Marshal Haddik, that the King had fallen foul of M. de Ried.

Apropos of the Sorbonne doctor with whom he disputed every day, he once said to me:

'See that I get a bishopric for him.'

'I don't think,' I said, 'that either my recommendation or Your Majesty's would do him any good.'

'No,' he said. 'I will write to the Russian Empress for the poor devil, as he is beginning to bore me. He fancies himself a Jansenist. My God, what humbugs the Jansenists of to-day are! It was wrong to destroy the cradle of their genius, Port Royal, no matter how narrow it was. It is wrong to destroy anything. Why have they destroyed those repositories of the grace of Athens and Rome, those excellent professors of the humanities, and perhaps of humanity, the Jesuits? Education will suffer. However, as my brothers, the Catholic, most Christian, very faithful and apostolic kings, have expelled them, I, the heretic, collect as many as I can. I preserve the race. I was saying to mine the other day: "I could easily sell a rector like you, father, for three hundred crowns: you, reverend provincial father, six hundred, and so on, in proportion. When a man is not rich, he speculates."'

Continuing his journey, Ligne reached St. Petersburg in August. Warmly received by the Empress, he became almost her confidant. Here is the fine portrait he traced of her when he heard of her death:

Catherine II was still handsome sixteen years ago. One saw that she had been pretty rather than beautiful. The majesty of her brow was tempered by pleasant eyes and a pleasant smile; but the brow told everything. Without being a Lavater, one could read it like a book: genius, justice, courage, depth, equality, kindliness, calmness, and firmness. The breadth gave great promise of memory and imagination. One could see that there was room for all. Her chin, rather pointed, did not exactly stick out, but it by no means receded, and it had a noble contour. The oval of her face was correspondingly imperfect, but was very agreeable, as candour and gaiety dwelt on her lips. She must have had a fresh complexion and fine throat, though this at the expense of her figure, which had been very slender at first; but one gets stout enough in Russia. She was neat, and, if she had arranged her hair properly, would have looked well.

One did not notice that she was small. She told me, slowly, that she had been extremely animated, which seemed incredible. Her three bows, Russian and masculine fashion, on entering a room, were always the same: one to the right, one to the left, one to the centre. Everything she did was measured and methodical. She had the art of listening, and such habitual presence of mind that she seemed to be listening when she was thinking of something else. She never talked for the sake of talking, and she drew out those who spoke to her. Still, Maria Theresa had

much more magic and seductiveness. She pleased at first sight, being anxious herself to please everybody, especially by her grace, which gave her less studied resources. Our Empress destroyed the impression she made: the Russian Empress made a less deep impression at first, but she deepened it.

They were alike in respect of the *impavidas ferient ruinæ*: nothing in the world would make them yield. Their great souls were steeled against reverses. Enthusiasm went before the one, and followed upon the other.

If Catherine's sex had permitted her the occupations of a man, who can see everything, go everywhere, enter into every detail, there would not have been a single abuse in her Empire. In regard to detail she was certainly *greater* than Peter V, and she would never have been guilty of his shameful capitulation at Pruth. Anne and Elizabeth, on the contrary, would have been mediocre men. As women, their reigns were not inglorious. Catherine II combined the qualities she found in them with those which made her the creator, rather than the autocrat, of her empire. She was certainly a greater politician than the other Empresses, and she never ran a risk, as Peter did. In victory or peace, she never suffered a reverse.

She had all that was good—that is to say, all that was great—in Louis XIV. She resembled him in her magnificence, her feasts, her pensions, her purchases, her splendour. She kept her Court better, because there was nothing theatrical or exaggerated about her. But what an imposing blend of colour in the rich Asiatic and military costumes of more than thirty different nations! One trembled on seeing Louis XIV: one was reassured at sight of Catherine. Louis was intoxicated with glory: Catherine sought it, and attained it, without losing her head. There was plenty to turn one's head in the continuous fairyland of our triumphal and romantic journey through the Taurid—

surprises, squadrons, regiments, illuminations of ten leagues of country, enchanted palaces, gardens created in a night for her: in the midst of success and homage, seeing at her feet the *hospodars* of Wallachia, the dethroned kings of the Caucasus, the families of persecuted princes who came to ask her help or hospitality. Instead of all this turning her head, she said to me, when we visited the battlefield of Poltawa: 'So that is the fate of empires. A single day decides it. If the Swedes had not made the mistake to which you draw my attention, we should not be here.'

Her Imperial Majesty spoke of the part that one ought to play in the world, but she knew it was a part. If it had been any other part, in any other class, she would, with her excellent judgment, have played it well. But the part of Empress went best with her countenance, the elevation of her soul, and the immensity of her genius, which was as vast as her Empire. She knew herself, and she recognized merit. Catherine made her choice with cool head. She put every man in his place. She said to me one day: 'I often laugh to myself when I see the alarm of a general or a minister when I treat his enemies well. They are not my enemies, I say to myself. I employ them because they have ability, and I smile at those who imagine that I will make no further use of men whom they do not like.'

She often balanced the credit of some by that of others, and so led them to double their zeal and vigilance. It is after seeing all these methods of getting service, and being led by none, that I once wrote to her: 'People talk about the St. Petersburg cabinet. I do not know a smaller, for it is only a few inches in size. It extends from one temple to the other, and from the root of the nose to the roots of the hair.'

The Empress, on leaving one of the provinces she had visited, and getting into her carriage, was still

paying compliments, and giving thanks and presents. I said to her: 'Your Majesty seems to be very pleased with these people.' 'Not a bit,' she said; 'but I praise aloud, and scold in a whisper.'

Everything she said was good, and I could quote a thousand things, but never smart things. 'Isn't it a fact,' she asked me, 'that you had never really heard of me? You did not expect to find me such a duffer.' I answered that, as a fact, I had expected that I would need to keep my wits always in arms at her Court; that she did everything, and was a veritable firework; and that I preferred her easy conversation, which only became sublime when there was question of fine passages of history, sensibility, grandeur, or administration.

'What did you think I would look like?'

'Tall, straight, eyes like stars, and a wide petticoat,' I said. This amused her, and she often reproached me for it.

'I thought,' I added, 'that there would be nothing to do but admire; and admiration is very wearying.'

It was this contrast of the simplicity of the things she said in public with the big things she did which made her so piquant. She laughed at small matters and was amused with trifles.

'I should not have wit enough for Paris, should I?' she asked me one day. 'I am confident that if I had been like the women of my country who go there, no one would have given me a supper.'

Sometimes she called herself, in speaking to me, 'your imperturbable,' because, in discussing qualities of soul, I had said that that was hers. The word, which she took a quarter of an hour to say, doubling its majestic and sonorous slowness, amused her; especially when, to lengthen it still more, she would say: 'I have imperturbability, then.' 'It was all Mlle. Gardel taught me,' she said again. 'She was one of the old French refugee governesses. She taught

me enough to marry in my own world. Mlle. Gardel and I were not agreed on all that.'

In one of her letters to me, written during a naval battle in the last Swedish war, she says: 'It is to the roar of cannon, which shakes my windows, that your imperturbable writes you.' I never saw anything more prompt and better done than the dispositions for this unexpected war, written with her own hand, which she sent to Prince Potemkin during our siege of Oszakow. At the bottom she wrote: 'Have I done right, master?'

She always charged herself with ignorance; and one day, when she was talking to me about it, and I had proved to her that she knew by heart Pericles, Lycurgus, Solon, Montesquieu, Locke, the best ideas of Athens, Sparta, Rome, modern Italy and France, and the history of every country, I said to her:

'Since Your Majesty wishes, I will say of you what Father Griffet's lackey said of him, complaining to me that he never knew where he had put his snuff-box, handkerchief, or pen: "Believe me, that man is not what you suppose. Outside his science he knows nothing."'

The Empress made use of this profession of ignorance to laugh at doctors, academies, and sciolists. I agreed with her that she knew nothing about painting and music. I even proved to her one day—rather better than she liked—that her taste in buildings was poor.

'You will allow,' she said, showing me her new palace at Moscow, 'that that is a magnificent structure.'

'It is the beauty of a hospital,' I said. 'For a residence, it is pitiful. The doors of each room are too high, and are, nevertheless, too small for so long a suite of rooms; and, as at your hermitage, the rooms are all alike.'

In spite of a number of architectural faults, her public and private edifices make St. Petersburg the

finest city in the world. Her tastes replaced in her the taste which I refuse her, lest I should find her admirable in everything. However, she has collected all sorts of masterpieces in her palaces. She thought herself an expert on coins, but I do not say it.

When her unmusical ear was in the way of her mastery of the mechanism of verse, which the Comte de Ségur and I wanted to teach her, in her boat on the Borysthene, she said to us:

'You see, gentlemen, that you praise me in general, and in detail you find me ignorant.'

I said that she must agree that she possessed one science.

'And what is that?'

'The right thing in the right place.'

'I don't understand.'

'Your Majesty has never said anything, had anything said, changed, ordered, begun, or finished anything, except at the right time.'

'That sounds all right, perhaps,' she said, 'but let us look into it. I owe the splendour of my reign to Prince Orloff, for it is he who advised me to send my fleet to the Archipelago. It is to Prince Potemkin that I owe the Taurid and the expulsion of all the Tartars who threatened my Empire. All that can be said is that I educated these men. It is to Marshal Romanzoff that I owe my victories. What I said to him was: "Marshal, there is going to be a fight. It is much better to give blows than to receive them." It is to Michelson that I owe the capture of Pugatscheff, who nearly got as far as Moscow, and farther. Believe me, I have merely been lucky, and if people are content with me, it is because I have a little firmness and equality in my principles. I give a good deal of authority to those I employ; and if, in the provinces which border on the Persians, Turks, and Chinese, they use this sometimes for evil purposes, so much the worse for them. I try to find it out. I know that

they say: "God and the Empress will punish us"; but the one is very high up, and the other very far away. That's men, and I am only a woman.'

Another time she said to me:

'They do not say much good of me, I wager, in your Europe. They say that I will become bankrupt, I spend so much. Well, my little *ménage* keeps its feet.'

She liked this expression, for, when one complimented her on the regularity of her work, she would often say: 'One has to keep good order in one's little *ménage*.'

The strength of her mind was shown in what is wrongly called the frailty of the heart. Her favourites never had power or influence; but when a man had been trained for affairs by her Imperial Majesty herself, after trial, he was useful to her. This choice, always honourable on both sides, gave one the right to say and hear the truth. Thus I saw that the Count de Momonoff, who possessed that virtue in perfection, was always ready to sacrifice his favour. I have seen him contradict, defend, protect, recommend, insist, and resist. And I saw that he was liked for it; his fidelity and friendship were admired, and his loyalty and constant zeal to do good were recognized. She said to me:

'My supposed prodigality is an economy. The whole of it remains in the country, and returns to me some day. I have still some small resources; but, as you have told me that you would sell or gamble or lose the diamonds I might give you, here are merely a hundred roubles to get a ring with a portrait of me in it.'

She gave in every way. Apart from the sort of profusion in which she indulged as a great and powerful sovereign, she gave from generosity, like a great soul, from compassion, like a woman, and for reward, like a man who wants to be served properly. I do not know if it is the spirit she puts into it, or merely the

style of her soul, but she gave a singular complexion to everything. For instance, she wrote to Count Suvaroff:

'You know that I never promote any man out of his turn. I am incapable of wronging an older man. But you have made yourself a Marshal by the conquest of Poland.'

Wherever she went she had the portrait of Peter I on her snuff-box, and she said to me:

'It is so that I may ask myself every moment: What would he order, forbid, or do, if he were in my place?'

She told me that one of the things that made her like Joseph II, apart from the agreeableness of his daily intercourse with us, was his resemblance to Peter I in his activity and thirst for instruction, and his devotion to the State. 'He has a serious mind,' she said, 'yet pleasant. He is always occupied with useful things, and his head is always at work. I detest the unjust people who do not realize his worth.'

She was much liked by her clergy, though she had curtailed their wealth and authority. When Pugatscheff, at the head of his brigands, scouring the country, entered a church, sword in hand, to have prayers said for him, a priest took the sacrament and went to meet him, saying: 'Add to the number of your crimes, villain, by killing me with Our Lord Jesus Christ in my arms! Cut off my head, if you dare. I have just prayed for our great Empress.'

One could never speak against Peter I or Louis XVI in the presence of the Empress, nor make the slightest allusion to religion or morals. At the most one might say something a little ambiguous, but carefully veiled, and she would laugh quietly. She never allowed any licence of that sort, or personal depreciation; and it was only in the presence of the person concerned that she would at times make a very mild joke, which ended in giving him pleasure.

I had great trouble one day in getting forgiveness for a remark at the expense of Louis XVI, when I was walking with the Empress at Tsarkoye Selo. I said:

'Your Majesty will at least agree that this great King always needed a good straight avenue, a hundred and twenty feet wide, beside a canal of the same width, for his promenades. He never knew, as you do, what a path or a brook is.'

I have already mentioned her courage. When we were entering Barozisarai, twelve horses, too weak for our large coach, took us down a slope—or, rather, were taken down it themselves. We might have broken our necks. I should have been more nervous if I had not been so anxious to see if the Empress was nervous. She was as calm as at the breakfast we had just had.

She was fastidious as to her reading. She wanted nothing sad, or too delicate in point of subtlety and sentiment. She liked the novels of Le Sage, Molière, and Corneille. 'Racine is not my man,' she said, 'except in his *Mithridate*.' She had once laughed over Rabelais and Scarron, but she did not remember them. She had a poor memory for what was frivolous or uninteresting, but she never forgot what was interesting. She liked Plutarch, Amyot, Tacitus, d'Amelot de la Houssaye, and Montaigne. She said:

'I am a northern Gaul. I understand only the old French, not the new. I have tried to appreciate your men of letters with their "isms." I have had some of them here, and have written to them. They bored me, and did not understand me—all except my good protector, Voltaire. Do you know that it was he who gave me fame? He has paid me well for the pleasure I have taken all my life in reading him. He has taught me much while he amused me.'

The Empress knew nothing of modern literature. She had more feeling for logic than rhetoric. Her frivolous works—her comedies, for instance—had a moral aim, like her criticism of travellers, men of

society, sects, and especially Martinists, whom she thought dangerous. All the letters I have from her are full of great ideas, strong, prodigiously luminous, often critical, spirited, particularly when she was indignant at something that happened in Europe. Then there were her gaiety and good spirits. Her style is rather clear than light. Her serious works are profound. Her *History of Russia* is, in my opinion, as good as President Hénault's *Chronological Tablets*; but she had no feeling for fine shades, the charm of detail, or colour. Frederick II also had no colour, but he had the rest. He was more of a man of letters than Catherine.

Sometimes she would say to me: 'You want to laugh at me. What have I said?' She had spoken an old French word, or pronounced a word wrong—"baschante" for "bacchante," for instance. She promised to correct it, and then made me laugh again at her expense when she gracefully brought off a three-stroke at billiards which won a dozen roubles for me.

Her chief form of dissimulation was that she never said all that she thought and knew. But nothing ambiguous ever fell from her lips. She was too proud to deceive; and when she deceived herself, she appealed to her luck and her superiority to events, which she loved to master. Still, certain ideas on the reverses at the close of the reign of Louis XIV came to her mind; but they passed away like clouds. I am the only man who saw that, for a quarter of an hour only, the last declaration of war by the Turks made her think, humbly, that there is nothing stable in the world, and that glory and success are uncertain. She came out of the room with the serene air she had had before the departure of her courier, and with the confidence with which at first she inspired the whole Empire.

I had drawn up my case for her while she lived, as was done for the Egyptian kings after death,

dragging aside the veil of ignorance and malice which so often lies on history. I should have lost the charm of society, or I should not have devoted myself to it. Her touches of humanity were daily. One day she said to me:

'In order not to rouse my people too early, as it was very cold, I lit my fire myself. A young sweep, who thought I would not rise until half-past five, was in the chimney, and he shrieked like a demon. I quickly put the fire out, and asked his pardon.'

She never sent any man to Siberia or condemned a man to death. She often appealed to judges against their verdicts, asking for an inquiry to prove that she was wrong, if it was so, and often paying for the defence. Yet I noticed one stroke of malice in her: it was a kindly look, even a benefit, to embarrass those of whom she had ground to complain, but who were of outstanding merit in the Empire. And there is a touch of despotism in this prohibition of a man of her world to use his own house, saying to him:

'You shall have, twice a day, a table with twelve covers in my house. You will have in my house this group that you like to have in your own; but I order you to continue to spend, since that pleases you.'

Calumny, which has not respected the most beautiful, the best, the most sensitive and amiable of queens, whose soul and conduct I am best able to vindicate, will, perhaps, without respect for the memory of the most illustrious of sovereigns, cover her tomb with rushes. It has snatched away the flowers which should cover that of Antoinette, and it would steal the laurels which belong to that of Catherine.

The supposed finders of anecdotes, the libellists, the sophists of history, the indifferent, will malign her to say something smart, or to earn money. The malignant will try to lower her fame. But she will triumph. What I saw, in travelling two thousand leagues with her in her dominions, will be recalled—the love and

adoration of her subjects, the love and enthusiasm of her soldiers. I have seen them in the trenches, facing the balls of the infidel and all the rigours of the elements, console or inspirit themselves with the name of *Matuschka* (mother), their idol.

I have, in fine, seen what I would never have said of the Empress while she lived, and what my love of truth makes me write now that I have just learned that the most brilliant star of our hemisphere has gone.

Mme. Lucie Herpin suggests that "the friendship of Catherine for the Prince de Ligne grew into something deeper." Other writers have said the same of his relations with Marie Antoinette. All because they have merely echoed the jealousy of the malignant folk to whom Ligne refers.

Leaving St. Petersburg without having done anything in connection with the business that had taken him there (for fear of indelicacy to the Empress), Ligne went to Poland, where the "fool of a bishop" awaited him. After a stay at Wasky and Wilna, to hear Mgr. Massalski tell him that he would some day be King of Poland, Ligne reached Warsaw, where he obtained nationalization. There were twenty-five candidates on the benches to contest the right. With remarkable partiality, they were all set aside, and Charles Joseph alone remained. Still, three members of the Diet made a show of opposition.

They very nearly got sabred, and one man who drew his sabre against a member, with terrible threats, almost caused a dissolution of the Diet; and my too-

zealous partisan ran some danger of losing his head. I went to the opposers and succeeded in removing their prejudices, so that, speaking with a grace and eloquence worthy of their country, they said that they would each solicit the vote of one of their friends in favour of so honourable a nomination. I, contrary to custom, entered the hall of members, and embraced the moustache of the three orators. It electrified me, for I became an orator myself, and in Latin. Then I took their hands, and caressed them; and a general *sgoda* shook the room three times, until it nearly collapsed with the thunder of applause.

In 1781 Joseph II instructed his faithful subject, the Prince de Ligne, to represent him at the solemn inauguration at Luxembourg (August 6th). Later in the year the Emperor came himself to Belœil, where Charles of Lorraine, Governor of the Netherlands, awaited him. But he did not stay long.

There is little to record between 1781 and 1786. At Belœil the young Prince Charles was more absorbed in his picture gallery than in his wife. He was an ardent collector, and had, in the end, forty-eight authentic pieces of Raphael, eleven of Michael Angelo, seven of Leonardo da Vinci, five of Titian, twenty-seven of Rubens, twenty-six of Rembrandt, and eleven of Dürer. The father continued to travel and to try to rid himself of his financial troubles. In 1784 the two Princes went to Lyons, to see the aeronautical attempts of Pilâtre de Rozier. When the balloon ascended, on January 19th, it carried eight

passengers, including Charles de Ligne. Our hero, remaining on earth with his daughter-in-law, cursed and raged. Later he wrote:

> The most famous of these balloon experiments is the one which made me tremble most. My son Charles, who showed his love of danger, was one of the eight passengers who went up in the celebrated machine at Lyons. When I lost sight of him in the clouds, from which the Rhine and the Saone looked to him like narrow white ribbons, I was in a frightful state. Happily, though with a severe shock, I saw them come down, almost fall down, without injuring themselves, about four miles from the town. I was very pleased with the applause showered on him at the theatre that evening.

When he returned to Belgium, Prince Charles summoned a famous balloonist, who went up, at Mons, some months later, in the presence of the Duc and Duchesse d'Aremberg.

In his capacity of lieutenant-general on active service, Charles Joseph, on his return to Belgium during the summer of 1784, was appointed commander-in-chief of the Belgian Provinces, in the place of Count de Murray. In October of the same year he tried a movement with his troops against the United Provinces, with the aim of forcing them to suppress the Barrier Treaty and the clause of the Munster Treaty which cut off the trade of Antwerp from the sea. The war did not go far. Joseph II obtained satisfaction on these points and, at the intervention of France, he abandoned the others.

About the end of 1784 Charles and his wife set up an establishment at Paris. The young woman was content to live at Belœil when her father-in-law was there, but she detested it at other times. Her husband bought a hotel at Paris, in the Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin. Hélène now became intimate with the Prince de Condé, the Duchesse de Bourbon, and the Princesse de Conti, and she lost all attachment to her home. We shall see presently that, to follow her lover, Count Potocki, she did not hesitate to abandon her daughter Sidonie, born on December 8, 1786.

It was about this time that the Prince became friendly with the adventurer, the devil turned hermit, Jacques Casanova de Seingalt. Here is the portrait which Ligne has traced, with the title *Aventuros*, of the famous Italian:

He would have been a fine man if he were not ugly. He is tall, and built like a Hercules; but an African complexion, animated eyes, full of wit and truth, but constantly indicating susceptibility, restlessness, and vindictiveness, make him look rather ferocious, easier to move to anger than to gaiety. He laughs little, but he makes others laugh. He has a way of saying things which remind one of the clown or of Figaro, and makes him very agreeable. The only things he does not know are those which he pretends to know: the rules of dancing, of the French language, of taste, of etiquette and worldly wisdom. The only things about him that are not comic are his comedies; and his philosophic works are the only ones with no philosophy

in them, for all the others are full of it. He is always original, arresting, profound. He is a well of science; but he quotes Homer and Horace until you get disgusted. His turn of mind and his sallies are an extract of Attic wit. He is sensitive and grateful; but, when one offends him, he is malignant and detestable. A million would not redeem some little joke that you made at his expense.

His style is like that of the old-time prefaces: long-drawn, diffuse, and heavy. But, if he has something to tell, such as his adventures, he tells it with so much originality, candour, and dramatic movement that it is admirable. Without being aware of it, he is superior to *Gil Blas* and the *Diable Boiteux*. He believes in nothing, except what is least credible, for he is superstitious on a good many subjects. Fortunately, he is a man of honour and delicacy, otherwise, with his 'I promised God' and 'God wills it,' there is nothing in the world that he would not be capable of doing. He loves and desires everything; and, when he has had everything, he can do without anything. Women and girls, especially, are in his head, but they cannot pass out of it again, to go elsewhere. That makes him angry with the fair sex, with himself, with heaven, nature, and the year 1742. He has his revenge on whatever can be eaten or drunk. As he can no longer be a god in the garden, a satyr in the forest, he is a wolf at table. He is ungracious in everything. He commences gaily, and finishes sadly, desolated that he cannot begin again. If in one sense he has profited by his superiority to certain human beasts, it is in making the people about him happy. In the midst of the greatest disorders of the most stormy of youths and a career of adventure, often equivocal adventure, he has displayed honour, delicacy, and courage. He is proud because he is nothing and has nothing. Living on an income, or as a great lord, he might have found life easy; but let

no one oppose or, especially, laugh at him. You must read him or listen to him, for his self-esteem is always in arms. Never say that you know the story he is going to tell. Pretend that you hear it for the first time. Do not fail to be respectful, for a trifle will make him your enemy. His prodigious imagination, his native vivacity, his travels, all the professions he has exercised, and his firmness in spite of his lack of every moral and physical gift, make him a rare man, wonderful to meet, worthy of the consideration and friendship of the small number of people who have merit in his eyes. . . .

I believe it was then [1783] that he came to Paris for the first time. My nephew Waldstein met him at the house of the Venetian ambassador, and liked him. They often dined together there, and my nephew proposed to take him to Bohemia. Casanova, at the end of his money, his travels and adventures, agreed. He became librarian of a descendant of the great Waldstein. In this capacity he passed the last fourteen years of his life at the Château of Dux, near Toeplitz. I saw him there during six successive summers, and he made me really happy by the liveliness of his imagination, which was like that of a young man of twenty, and by his profound erudition. But do not imagine that in this haven of tranquillity which the kindness of Count Waldstein provided for him, to protect him from the storms, he never looked for any. There was not a single day when he had not some row about his coffee or his macaroni. Sometimes the cook forgot his polenta; at other times the groom had given him a poor carriage to come to see me; or the dogs had barked during the night and disturbed his sleep; or the priest had bored him by trying to convert him; or the Count had not said 'Good day' to him first; or they had maliciously served his soup too hot; or he had not been introduced to some distinguished man who had come to see the lance that

had pierced the great Waldstein; or the Count had borrowed a book from his library without telling him; or a servant had not raised his hat in passing; or they had not understood him when he spoke German; or he had gesticulated in declaiming his Italian poetry and they had not laughed; or they had laughed when he put on his large white hat, his gold-embroidered silk coat, his black velvet vest, and his buckled garters over his figured silk hose; or, again, they had laughed when, on entering the room, he had saluted as the famous dancing-master Marcel had taught him to do.

How should he escape these persecutions? God directs him one day to leave Dux. Without believing it quite as firmly as that he would die, of which he had now no doubt, he pretended that everything he did had been ordered by God. So God directs him to ask letters of introduction to the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, who loves me much, to the Duchess, who does not know me, and to the Berlin Jews. He departs secretly, leaving for Waldstein a letter of tender, proud, noble, but exasperated farewell. He is made to wait in ante-chambers. They cannot give a place either as librarian or chamberlain. He then tells everybody that the Germans are beasts. The excellent and very amiable Duke of Saxe-Weimar receives him magnificently; but he is soon jealous of Goethe and Wieland, and he begins to gird against them and the literature of the country.

In like manner at Berlin he inveighs against the ignorance, superstition, and roguery of the Hebrews to whom I had sent him, but for the money they lend him he draws bills on Waldstein, who laughs, and pays, and embraces him when he returns to Dux. Casanova then tells him, laughing, that God ordered him to make this six weeks' journey, to start without telling him, and to return at last to Dux. Delighted to see us, he tells us pleasantly all that he has had to suffer, or his 'humiliations,' as he put it. 'I am

proud,' he said, 'because I am nothing.' But within a week there are fresh misfortunes and tribulations.

He spent five years thus in groaning and lamenting, especially over the conquest of his ungrateful country by the French, in talking to us about the League of Cambray and the glory of his ancient and superb Venice, which had withstood Europe and Asia. As his appetite grew less every day, he became tired of life. But he ended nobly before God and men. He received the sacraments devoutly, saying: 'Great God, and you, witnesses of my death, I lived a philosopher, but I die a Christian.' What a lot in those few words!

In the horrible monotony of the château at Dux, Casanova wrote, with prodigious ease, his *Memoirs*, the *Story of My Flight*, the *Troubles in Poland*, etc., and a number of letters to those who wrote to him: notably, the Prince de Ligne, who sometimes lived at the château of the Princesse Clary, at Toeplitz, not far away. Two minds so well calculated to understand each other were, as we saw above, bound to sympathize; and Ligne escaped the prudery of his own world by going to Casanova. Their conversations, naturally animated and spiritual, were at times very bold. The friendship lasted many years, as the letters published by M. Uzanne show:

My fleas are growing, and they leap with joy to find our dear Casanova this summer at the gate of the stables, risking the kick of a horse to come and embrace his friend, who will say to him: 'Put your wig on quick. I am taking you to Toeplitz.'

God will tell you the same thing, adding '*Sequere Amicum.*' All the Lignes and Clarys rejoice to see you. It is the first time you get back to port without shipwreck. I can see clearly that you have done no wrong to your neighbour's wife or daughter, or mauled any gentleman. Let us use the time, which would like to, but cannot, use us. Let your nose, the spy of your palate, delight again in the perfume of the strawberries. A man can never be old with your heart, genius, and stomach.

When we can *sequere Deum* to Belœil, we will go there. Meantime, keep well, and love me as usual. Come to Vienna, if you find a Christian minister of Providence. Alleluia, Alleluia. Show yourself to all the people to whom I am always speaking about you. Accompany your hero and patron, the great modern Waldstein. And think often, my dear friend, of my tender attachment. (Vienna, December 16, 1795.)

Here, again, is a letter from Ligne to Casanova (undated) which concerns so captivating a person as Bonneval :

Why predict without ceasing thy death
To my anguished soul ?
Learn, that thou mayest know thy lot,
That twenty years for thy frame, as many for thy genius,
Will draw out thy life.

You want news of Bonneval. A proud Austrian and superstitious Spanish cabal, jealous because he had done most in the Turin victories, in the sixth year of Peterwardein, the sixteenth year of Belgrad, and the seventeenth year of the tender friendship of Prince Eugene, is trying to make trouble between them. The Prince was not devout ; but his two friends, Mme. de Bathyany and Mme. de Strattmann, who played

piquet with him every day, and with whom he found consolation for the credit he lost at Court, had now some influence over him. The Prince, more and more disgusted with business, had left too much authority to his three clerks, Kock, Brouckamfen, and Ettel. Bonneval asked for the governorship of Esseck. The second of these gentlemen, who does not seem to have liked French ways, said : '*Wass ! Der franzose Esseck ? Dreck : und nicht Esseck.*' It was said with all the delicacy of the Austrian dialect. Bonneval supped every day with the Duc d'Aremberg, my father, my uncle, and Rousseau, at the inn ; for it was the good time, Jean Baptiste not being a water-drinker like Jean Jacques. The Hungarian wine was better than the Palermo wine of the Latin Rousseau, the Bohemian pheasants better than the peacocks of Mæcenas, the *schille* better than the fishes of the Tiber. They sang over dessert, and one day Bonneval gave birth to a shocking poem on the clerk and on Austria generally. . . .[1]

Bonneval reached Brussels in a bad temper with a bad head, and he foolishly broke out on the subject of the Queen of Spain. He was arrested at my house. My father and uncle and a few others, who cared nothing about ministers and favour, accompanied him in a carriage. His regiment, which worshipped him, threw down their guns, to break them. The whole country, which was sound and free in those days, was in distress over the fate of one of the bravest and most amiable men on earth.

[1] The poem is not included here. The Prince de Ligne closed his letter to Casanova with a continuation of it which is even worse. Bonn fled to Turkey, and become a Pasha in the Turkish Army.—TRANS.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE CRIMEA

ORDERED TO St. Petersburg in the year 1786, Ligne disembarked there in December, and found Catherine II in the midst of preparations for a long journey. The journey really veiled a vast plan. Turkey had just surrendered the Crimea and the Kuban to the Empress, but she wanted Constantinople as eagerly as she wanted to destroy Poland. Joseph II, who was to meet the Tsarina at Kherson, knowing what influence Ligne could have on the decisions of his august friend, sent our hero to her as "diplomatic jockey," with instructions to counterbalance the efforts of the French attaché, the Count de Ségur. France at that time protected the Porte.

Ligne left Russia in December to come to a clear understanding with Joseph II at Vienna, and he rejoined Catherine (who left St. Petersburg on January 18, 1787) at Kieff. The voyage promised to be brilliant, not only in luxury and

comfort, but in the choice of courtiers. M. R. Waliszewski writes :

> Drawn by thirty horses, Her Majesty's coach includes a salon for eight persons, a gaming-table, a small library, and every convenience. It was almost equal to a modern Pullman car. The favourite, Momonoff, the inseparable Mlle. Protassoff, and the no less inseparable Leo Nasychkyne, took their places in it with Catherine, who also, the first day, invited Count de Cobenzl, the Austrian envoy. Next day it was the turn of the Count de Ségur. Fourteen other carriages and a hundred and eighty sledges conveyed the rest of the suite. There were seventeen degrees of frost.

We need not recall the wonders of this journey : the decoration of the countries through which Catherine passed, the " wooden palaces, built and furnished hastily at the places where the travellers would sleep, the relays, the covered galleries, the tables laden with refreshment." In a word, it was the awful misery of a Russian campaign, disguised and decorated for the passage of the sovereign. M. Waliszewski tells us that an assistant of Patiomkin, the stage-manager, says : " I was with His Highness in the Taurid . . . two months before the arrival of the Empress . . . and I wondered what he could show Her Majesty there. There was nothing. When I returned with Her Majesty, God knows what miracles had been done, and the devil knows where all the establishments, and armies, and populations, and Tartars in rich costumes, and Cossacks, and vessels came from." The fact

is that they drove men, women, and children out of Little Russia, and the places through which the Empress would not pass, and many of them died on the way.

Ligne evidently did not understand the atrocious comedy which was being played. Full of the glamour of the adventure, he was more interested in Ségur's madrigals than in his real mission. At Kieff the caravan was embarked on the Borysthene, on eighty boats. Ligne was hardly installed when he began to smile on his companions. Ségur writes:

> From that moment we seemed to feel a mitigation of the rigour of a sombre winter and the coming of spring. Claiming the right to say whatever entered his head, the Prince de Ligne mingled a little politics in the charades and tableaux; and, though he at times pushed gaiety to the point of folly, he occasionally, to the rattle of his bells, emitted useful and piquant moral reflections. He was a courtier from habit, a flatterer on principle, good from character, and a philosopher from taste.

And here we must, without further delay, speak of the Marquise de Coigny; for it is to her that we owe the moving, spiritual, ironic, historical, and even poetical account which the Prince wrote of his marvellous journey with the Empress of the North. These *Letters to the Marquise de Coigny* cannot be described as our hero's masterpiece, for it is impossible to locate the best amongst so many writings of different

kinds. But the work is a masterpiece of sincerity and grace; and the carelessness of the style is, for once, cleverly maintained.

Louise Marthe de Conflans was born on October 4, 1759, of Louis Gabriel, Marquis de Conflans, and Jeanne Françoise de Bouteroue. Educated at the Abbaye au Bois, she married the Marquis de Coigny in her seventeenth year. It would be useless to seek anything but reason in the reasons for this marriage. On June 28, 1778, the Marquise de Coigny gave birth to Antoinette Jeanne Françoise, who later married Horace Sebastiani de la Porte, and was the mother of Altarice Rosalba Fanny, Duchess of Praslin, who was killed by her husband in 1847. The year 1789 separated M. de Coigny from his wife. He served the Bourbons, and he attacked them, manœuvring for the favour of whoever was in power.

Louise Marthe, of whom Hélène Massalska writes that "she said nothing like anybody else, and there was character in her slightest words," was presented at Court at twenty-one, and she at once won a reputation as a clever woman. Moreover, she soon quarrelled with the Queen, in connection with Lauzun, who had an "ardently platonic" love for her. Nevertheless, our hero's friend had a proud motto: "Never to have a lover, as that would be to abdicate." M. Lebasteur writes:

At Paris the Marchioness enjoyed her reputation for wit, loading with sarcasm and epigrams whoever offended her. Her words circulated. Everybody told of the way in which, it seems, Napoleon asked her how she was: 'How is your tongue?' Rulhière had once said to her: 'I only did one wrong thing in my life.' She retorted: 'When will it end?' Lady Jersey asked her: 'Is it true that you have taken the liberty of calling me a fool?' She replied: 'I heard it, but I did not repeat it.' When the people burned the bust of Eprémesnil, who had lost his popularity, she said: 'Nothing burns so well as dead laurels.'

We will not waste our time in trying to find whether the Prince loved the Marquise de Coigny, whom he called "the most amiable of women and the prettiest of boys," very violently. It is not very important. It seems to me more logical to explain their relations by the magnetism of their harmonizing spirits. Were they not made to understand each other? Clearly there is a certain tenderness in their letters:

Behold fate, Mme. la Marquise. I left you in the midst of a dozen kinds of lovers who do not understand you; and I, who understand myself in understanding you, will not for a long time hear you. Here I am twelve hundred leagues away from your charms, but always near to your spirit, which returns unceasingly to my memory.

But it seems that Ligne prefers the light and piquant note of mockery to emotion. At the moment when he wrote his first letter to the Marchioness, the "fleet of Cleopatra" was

imprisoned in the ice of the Borysthene, four hundred leagues from St. Petersburg, near Kieff, where it remained from February 9th to May 1, 1787. Although Ligne was never a diplomatist, he was much amused at the intrigues that went on around him :

> There is something here for everybody, for every type : high and low politics, high and low intrigues, large and small Poland. Some dignitaries of that country, who are duped or who dupe others, all very amiable—their wives still more so—feel sure that the Empress does not know that they insulted her in the brawls of the last Diet. The men try to get a look from Prince Potemkin, which is difficult, because the Prince squints rather ; the women want the ribbon of the Order of St. Catherine, to arrange it coquettishly and make their friends and relations mad.
>
> I, who have nothing to risk, and perhaps some glory to acquire, want it with all my heart. Then I say to myself : Ought I to want what brings misery to others ? I then desire it no longer ; and again some fermentation in my blood brings me back to it, and a remnant of reason opposes it.

Ségur, directed by his Government to try to preserve peace, would have liked to throw our hero in the fire : " One sees how far such a friend, enjoying the full confidence of Catherine, was from supporting me in maintaining her pacific disposition."

We shall see, especially when Joseph II becomes the guest of the Empress, that, on the pretext of making madrigals, they all observe

each other, explore the ground, and try to discover each other's intentions. Those who do not want war against the Turks have the appearance of being partisans: those who want it do not seem to be keen on it. It is a comedy.

One day, between Kanieff and Krementzuck, the Tsarina said to her friend the Prince de Ligne: "This St. Petersburg Cabinet, which is now afloat on the Dnieper, must seem a very big thing, since it gives others so much to do." Europe, M. Lebasteur says, was speaking about a conquest of India and Japan. "I don't know a smaller one," answered Ligne, "for it is only a few inches in size. It stretches from one temple to the other, and from the root of the nose to the roots of the hair."

But let us leave the Prince to tell in his own words the life on board the Imperial galleys and all the memorable adventures of the journey:

Cleopatra's fleet set out from Kiovie, when a general cannonade had apprised us of the fall of the Borysthene. If, seeing us embark on the eighty boats, with three thousand men in our service, anyone had asked: 'What the devil are they going to do in those galleys?' we could have replied, 'Amuse ourselves, and *voguent les galères*'; for no voyage was ever more brilliant and pleasant.

Our rooms were upholstered in Chinese taffetas, with couches; and, when one of those who accompanied the Empress, as I did, left or returned to his galley, at least a dozen musicians, in each boat, played as we embarked or disembarked. There was at times

a little risk in returning at night, after supping with the Empress, because we had to go up the Borysthene in a little boat, often against the wind. That nothing should be wanting, we one day had a storm, in which two or three of the galleys stranded on sand-banks.

Our Cleopatra does not travel for the purpose of seducing Mark Antonys, Octaviuses, and Cæsars. Ours was great enough already in the general admiration of her and in her genius and power. Cleopatra does not drink pearls, but she gives many away. She resembles the ancient Cleopatra only in her love of beautiful sailing, magnificence, and study. She has certainly given more than two hundred thousand volumes to libraries in her Empire. That is the much-vaunted number of books at Pergamus, from which the Queen of Egypt re-established the library at Alexandria. In regard to festivals, Kherson is a veritable Alexandria.

After the feasts at Krementzuck, given by Prince Potemkin, who had had trees as large as himself brought from a great distance and planted in a really magical English garden, we disembarked at the cataracts of Keydac, the former capital of the Zaporogues, a tribe of aquatic brigands. Here the Emperor Joseph came to meet us.

From this point the enchantment increased. What greatly astonished and interested the Emperor, for he is a good musician, was a score of musicians playing the same note, which makes celestial music; for it is too extraordinary to belong to earth.

I forgot to say that the King of Poland awaited us at Kanieve, on the Borysthene. He spent there three months and three millions to see the Empress for three hours. I went, in a little Zaporavian skiff, to tell him of our arrival. An hour later the great nobles of the Empire went for him in a splendid ship, and, as he entered it, he said to them, with his ineffable charm of person, and his fine voice: 'Gentlemen, the

King of Poland has directed me to commend Count Poniatowsky to you.'

The dinner was very gay. We drank his health, to the accompaniment of a triple salute by the artillery of our fleet. When he left the table, the King could not find his hat. The Empress saw where it was, and gave it to him. 'Covered my head twice!' said the King gallantly, referring to his crown. 'Ah, madame, that is to overload me with benefits and gratitude.' Our squadron had formed up before the King's windows, who turned to give us supper. A reproduction of Vesuvius, during the whole night we were anchored there, lit the hills and plains more clearly than the sun at noon, and gilded and set aflame the whole country. I fear I am becoming lyrical. But after seeing it, we hardly know what night is.

The Empress felt the charm of society as she had never known it before; and, as there are one or two of us who never play, she sacrificed for us the part she used to take. Yesterday, at table, she said to us:

'It is very curious how the plural "you" got into use. Why was "thou" abandoned?'

'It has not been abandoned, madame,' I said, 'for great persons use it still. Does not Jean Baptiste Rousseau say to God, "Lord, in thy adorable beauty?" And we say "thou" to God in all our prayers.'

'Well, gentlemen, why do you treat me more ceremoniously? Come, now, I will give you an example.' She turned to the steward, and said: 'Wilt thou pass me that?'

'Yes,' he said, 'if thou wilt give me something else.'

That released a deluge of 'thous,' each more amusing than its predecessor. I put in mine. 'Thy Majesty' seemed to me all right. Others did not know what to say to the autocrat of all the Russias and nearly every other part of the world.

The Empress permitted the Prince de Nassau and myself, as experts, to go and see Oczakoff and the

ten Turkish vessels which had been placed, badly enough, at the end of the Borysthene, as if to stop our course, in case their Imperial Majesties should care to go by water as far as Kinburn. When she saw their position on the little map which was made for her, Nassau offered to remove the obstruction for her. The Empress laughed, and gave up the idea. I see in that a pretty advance courier of the pretty war we shall soon have, I hope.

I thought the other day that it was for that purpose Prince Potemkin took an engineer officer and an artillery officer into the Empress's room, where the Emperor also was. 'You are aware,' said the Empress, 'that your France continues, for no clear reason, to protect the Mohammedans?' Ségur turned pale. Nassau blushed. Fitzherbert gasped. Cobenzl was excited. I laughed. Well, it was not war. There was merely question of building a magazine in one of the seven arms of the famous port of Sebastopol. When I told my hopes in that matter to Ségur, he said: 'We have to draw up the ladder after that ministerial folly of your general confession of poverty, in your ridiculous Assembly of the Notables.'

'How far do you think I have succeeded with the Empress?' the Emperor asked me one day.

'Marvellously, Sire,' I said.

'But it is very difficult to do it with you other people,' he added. 'My dear ambassador, out of gratitude, courtesy, feeling for her, and friendship for me, take her censer at times. You put a few grains of incense in it sometimes yourself. Thanks from all of us. M. de Ségur has his very French madrigals; and your Englishman pays her a little flattery occasionally, in the shape of an epigram, and as if reluctantly, which does not make it less amusing.'

Three vessels have been launched, and it pleased me to see myself launched. As you know, one of them was the *Ligne*. The gauzes, pearls, and flowers

which decorated the curtains of the canopies which had been set up on the bank for the two monarchs looked as if they had come out of the *Traits Galants* of the Rue Saint Honoré. It was the work of Russian soldiers, who are turned into dressmakers, sailors, popes, musicians, or surgeons, or anything that is wanted, by a wave of the wand—and it is not the wand of a charming fairy like yourself. I am off to dream of your enchantments in this land of wizards. We set out at once for the Taurid, where, if Iphigenia had been as amiable as you, she would certainly never have been sacrificed, at least not in that way.'

In July Ligne informs the Marquise de Coigny that he has reached the Taurid. It is in a letter sent from Barczisarai (April 1, 1787) that one finds, perhaps for the first time in the annals of French letters, a highly coloured description of nature. The literary style of the eighteenth century merely sketches. Everybody (king, queen, nobles, merchants, monks and chambermaids) writes letters very fairly. There are few documents relating an adventure of conversation without a bit of "character." They sketch and embroider very prettily. But it takes the Prince de Ligne to put colour into the sketch; for I, for my part, am not a great admirer of the lachrymose ecstasies of Bernardin or the frigid descriptions of Rousseau, and it is not so much the natural "artist" in Ligne which does this as his absolute sincerity and his vibrant emotion.

From Kherson onward we found camps in deserts which were magical in their Asiatic magnificence. I

do not know where I am, or in what age I am. When I suddenly see mountains move, I fancy it is a dream; but they are troops of dromedaries which, as they rise on their long legs, have that appearance at some distance. 'Those,' I say to myself, 'must have been the steeds on which the three kings rode to Bethlehem.' I am still dreaming, I say, when I meet young princes of the Caucasus almost completely clad in silver, on horses whose skin is finer and whiter almost than that of any of our duchesses, with the exception of one or two. When I see them armed with bows and arrows, I fancy myself in the days of the old and the young Cyrus. Their quivers are superb. You know only that of Cupid, and, thank God, your darts are better than theirs; they are more piquant and gayer, for they have not been dipped in the Anacreontic. Woe to those who find them inflaming! For you do not love to cure them. . . .

When I see detachments of Circassians as handsome as the sun, with corseted waists narrower than that of Mme. de Lauzun: when I meet Murzas better clad than little Choiseul at the Queen's balls, Cossack officers with more taste than Mlle. Bertin in dress, and colours, in their furniture and clothes, as harmonious as those Mme. Lebrun dares to put in her pictures, I am amazed.

From Parthenizza Ligne writes his best page. Catherine had offered him two estates in the Crimea, Nikita and Parthenizza. It is said that, when the Prince wished to take the oath of allegiance as a common Murza, Joseph II, pointing to his Golden Fleece, remarked that he was the first of the Order to take an oath amongst long-bearded men. Ligne answered: "Sire, it

is better for Your Majesty for me to be with Tartar gentlemen than with Flemish gentlemen." There had just been a revolt in the Belgian provinces.

It is a silvered shore of the Black Sea. It is on the brink of the broadest of the streams which discharge the torrents of the Tczetterdar. It is in the shade of two of the largest and oldest nut-trees in the world. It is at the foot of a rock from which one can see a column, a sad relic of the temple of Diana made famous by the sacrifice of Iphigenia. It is on the left of the rock from which Thoas precipitated strangers. It is, in a word, in the most beautiful and interesting place in the world that I write this.

I am on cushions and a Turkish carpet, surrounded by Tartars who offer me this hospitality. They watch me write, and they raise their eyes in astonishment as if I were a second Mahomet.

I discover the fortunate bounds of ancient Idalia and the borders of Anatolia. Figs, palms, olives, cherries, apricots, and peaches in bloom spread the sweetest perfume, and protect me from the sun's rays. The waves of the sea roll diamond-like pebbles at my feet. Behind me I see, through the foliage, the houses of my quasi-savages, with their flat roofs, which are their drawing-rooms. I see their cemetery which, in the situation which the Mohammedans always choose, gives me an idea of the Elysian Fields. It is on the banks of the stream of which I have spoken. But at the point where the pebbles chiefly obstruct its course, it broadens a little and flows peacefully amongst the fruit trees, which lend a hospitable shade to the dead. Their tranquil resting-place is marked by stones crowned with turbans, some of which are gilt, and some kind of marble funerary urns, though badly made.

The diversity of the scene, which awakens thought,

makes the pencil fall from my fingers. I stretch myself on my cushions, to brood.

We are not so enthusiastic as some critics, and will not affect to regard Charles Joseph de Ligne as a forerunner of the literary movement of the nineteenth century. Clearly, the Prince has not the richness in metaphors of Chateaubriand, Hugo, and others. Clearly the brush still hesitates. But it is just as clear that we have here a new conception of nature, singularly moving, with firm lines and much colour.

Are not the very defects a proof of the transition? The Parthenizza letter is still a clumsy way of expressing a melancholy, not unusual in our hero, which any man may feel, at certain periods of life, when he looks back over the road. Ligne dreamed, in a unique home of sun and silence, of the flowers of the past and the future; and, to express an emotion which others felt also, but which their promptness to analyse prevented them from taking seriously, our Prince, eternal scribbler, took the trouble to write. In order to succeed, he had to use, if not a new vocabulary, at least an original way of arranging his words.

To be quite truthful, however, we will admit that the Prince's melancholy did not last long. The end of the fifth letter shows this:

Without regret for the past or fear of the future, I let my present float on the stream of my destiny.

Having laughed at myself for the little merit I have, and my adventures at Court and in the army, I recall that I congratulated myself on not being worse than I am, and on my great talent for turning everything to my advantage. Child of nature, perhaps a spoiled child, I saw myself at last as I have just depicted myself, in this vast sea, which, as I said, mirrors my soul as the glass mirrors my face. . . . I collect my wits, which had been scattered over the magic lantern of my life. I look with emotion upon these beautiful scenes, which have given me the most delicious day of my life, and which I shall never see again. A few tears still flow. And a fresh wind suddenly rising to disgust me with the skiff which should take me by sea to Theodorie, I mount my Tartar horse and, preceded by my guide, I plunge into the horrors of the night and the road and the torrent, to cross the famous mountains and, in forty-eight hours, to rejoin their Imperial Majesties at Karassbazar.

Passing through Kiovie, Kherson, and Barczisarai, and after a stay at Parthenizza, Ligne joins the Imperial traveller at Karassbazar. She is preparing to proceed to Moscow by way of Kuffa and Tula. From Kuffa he writes:

I went into several *cafés* and shops, and saw foreigners from even more distant parts—Greeks, Asiatic Turks, manufacturers of weapons from Persia and the Caucasus. There is then, I said, no civility except amongst people who are not civilized. Here people meet you with a pleasant and more or less respectful air. The language is as noble as the Greek or the Spanish. We have not here the rough sibilation or the drawl or the chant or the ignobility of the languages of Europe. A Tartar would, if he went to the great city of urbanity and grace, be astonished to hear a cabman talk to his

horse on the boulevards or a market woman talking to her neighbour on the Place Maubert. I recall it with regret, my dear Marchioness: M. de Voltaire has said that there is something of the tiger and the ape in the French, and, when I think of the insolence, the avarice, and the swinishness of the nations of Europe, I compare it with the kindliness and cleanliness of everything here. . . . As to faces, I have only seen those of a battalion of Albanians, a small Macedonian colony settled in Batava. Two hundred pretty women and girls, with guns, bayonets, and lances, with necks of Amazons, very coquettish, and long, tastefully-dressed hair, had come to meet us; to do us honour, not out of curiosity. There are no prattlers in this country. Boasting, like impertinence and flattery, are confined to civilization.

That is the summary of Ligne's travels in oriental Russia. It is not our place to determine the historical value of the voyage of Catherine II. The fact is that, having reconnoitred the country, along the Turkish frontier, the Empress declared war against the Turks as soon as she got back to St. Petersburg (August 18, 1787). As an ally of Russia, Austria did the same in the following year. The journey had been merely a play: the foreign ambassadors simply amiable and unimportant guests.

M. de Bulgakoff, the Russian ambassador in Turkey, having been arrested, the Tsarina at once declared war, which she had long desired. Ligne, convinced that Austria would not take part in it, in spite of its treaty of alliance, asked the permission of Joseph II to enter the

service of Catherine. At the same time the Emperor made him Field-Marshal (general Commander-in-Chief of the Austrian infantry). The letters crossed; but a second note from Vienna soon authorized our hero to take his place in the Russian Army. He prepared at once, and, on November 1, 1787, he set out to join Potemkin.

My God! What weather! What roads! What a winter! What headquarters! I am a confident man, and I believe I am liked. I thought the Prince, who had said so, would be charmed to see me. I only understood six months afterwards the embarrassed air with which he met me. I fall upon his neck and ask: 'When is it to be Dcsakoff?' 'Oh, my God,' he said, 'there are eighteen thousand men of a garrison, and I have not as many in my army. We lack everything. God help me, I am the most miserable of men.' 'What!' I said. 'Are the Kinburn affair [1] and the retirement of the Fleet to count for nothing? I have travelled night and day, as I was told that you would begin the siege at once.' 'Alas,' he said, 'may it please God to prevent the Tartars from coming here and putting everything to fire and sword. God has saved me, and I will not forget it. He has allowed me to collect what troops there are behind the King. It is a miracle that up to now I have kept so much of the country.' 'Where are the Tartars, then?' I asked. 'Everywhere,' he replied, 'and Seraskier [chief general of the Turkish Army] amongst them; with a lot of Turks near Ackermann, two thousand in Bender, the Dniester held, and ten thousand in Khoezim.'

[1] The Prince had been told that a hundred thousand Turks had been killed at Kinburn, and that the Turkish Fleet had retired.

All this was so doubtful that Ligne perceived the fact, and wrote it at once to Joseph II. For months the Prince fumed with nothing to do. At last, on February 9, 1788, the Austrian Army, under the command of the Emperor and Marshal de Lacy, took the field, and laid siege to Sabacz, in Serbia.

Charles de Ligne, an engineer officer, was directed to construct the trenches in which the infantry and artillery were to be on the day of the attack. He was the first on the walls of the enemy fortress, having crossed the water in the moat on a plank. For this he was made lieutenant-colonel on the spot, and he received the Order of Maria Theresa. Joseph wrote to Ligne, on April 25th :

> We have taken Sabacz, with slight losses. Your son Charles contributed greatly to the success of the enterprise by the infinite trouble he took in constructing the trenches for the batteries, and he was the first to climb the parapet, and bring the others up. So I have made him Lieutenant-Colonel, and given him the Order of Maria Theresa. It gives me real pleasure to tell you this, as I am sure it will please you, knowing your tender feeling for your son and your patriotism.

Charles, in turn, hastened to send word, very affectionately, to his father: "We have Sabacz. I have the cross. I need not say, papa, that I thought of you in going first to the attack." And there is this other, most tender

and moving letter, from father to son, full of the finest qualities of our hero :

What can I tell you, my dear Charles, that you do not know as to what I felt in receiving a most kind and gracious letter from His Majesty ? This letter is worth more to you than all the parchments (food for rats), titles, diplomas, and patents. There are such touching expressions in regard to both of us that, though I am getting too big to weep, I could not help shedding tears every time I read the letter. All the generals—Circassians, Zaparogues, Tartars, Cabordians, Germans, Russians, Cossacks, etc.—came in a crowd to me, and said charming things which I will never forget.

The father and most tender friend of my Charles have been deeply moved by the honour you have gained. It is more than I have ever done. But General de Ligne has suffered diabolically.

Can you imagine, my boy, what a fine thing it would have been for both of us if I had been the first you had helped to climb the parapet which you reached before everybody ?

My God, what a nuisance to be far away ! I who would have coolly seen you get a bullet at Hühnerwasser am now as nervous as a woman. It is only a step from this condition to that of a minister. Nevertheless I arranged for a good charge with several regiments of light horse. I did not make one except at the head of ten uhlans against five or six drunken Prussian hussars. You will agree that that is not the most memorable action of the century. I do not want to shut myself up in these boxes of rooms, where you open a door to enter and go out.

One gets a command always when one desires, some day or other, so that I am quite sure that, without having a corps, what I want will only happen where

I am. I have already learned all I needed for that, and I understand Russian pretty well. Do you see now, Charles, that I was right in putting you in the engineers? You have genius, as I knew. But had you no wound at all? You do not say.

Do not let any courier leave for Her Majesty without a letter to me. A thousand things to my comrade Rouvroy, whose lot and wound I envy. Poor Poniatowski! I fear he is following in his father's footsteps. He has already done so in regard to courage, military spirit, personal devotion to His Majesty, generosity, etc., but let us hope he will not be as unfortunate. Embrace him for me.

The Austrians were busy, but the Russians still did nothing. Ligne was so exasperated that he left Potemkin to go and visit Romanzoff (who shared the command with Potemkin), and see if there was no hope of a movement:

At last I have left this trench of filth. It happens to form a salient, which makes it look like a fort. I should have died if I had remained another week.

Romanzoff received Ligne very warmly, and was as affable and courteous as Potemkin had been rude; but he seemed to be just as unwilling to act. In despair Ligne wrote to the Austrian Ambassador and to Ségur, hoping that they would do something with the Tsarina. On June 8, 1788, he wrote to Charles:

If you ask me how I am, my dear Charles, I can only say: Always the same. I run about the army, trying to get something done. The devil is in it, in spite of all their Russian signs of the cross.

From Romanzoff's camp he returned to Potemkin, and amused himself as well as he could :

I will find a place for your Prussian officer. I cannot get Prince Potemkin to advance beyond Liman, but I can advance officers. I have made generals, majors, etc. You have had your harvest of laurels, and laugh at all that.

The same inactivity always, one-third due to fear, one-third to malice, and a third to ignorance. I should like to have a fourth of your glory at the end of the war. Your letters are as brave and gay as yourself. They have your physiognomy.

A frightful storm sends me to bed. A cloud burst in the air above the camp, and it is flooding the pretty little houses I have under an immense Turkish tent, so that I hardly know where to tread. Oh ! They just come to tell me that a major has been killed in his tent by the lightning. It falls amongst us nearly every day. Every man for himself.

The other day they cut off the arm of a light-horse officer, who had been bitten by a tarantula. As to lizards, no one knows better than I that they are friendly to man. I live with them, and would rather trust them than the men of this country.

At times I hear a little wind. I open my tent, but I close it again very quickly. It is as if the wind had passed through a furnace.

But, of course, we have every kind of entertainment here. Would you like a proof of the good taste of Prince Repnin ? You know the customs of the service here : the vileness of inferiors and insolence of superiors. When Prince Potemkin makes a sign, or lets something drop, you see a score of generals on their knees. The other day seven or eight of them wanted to help Prince Repnin to take off his coat. 'No,' he said, 'the

Prince de Ligne will do it.' Neat lesson! They have more delicacy of mind than of heart; and they know it.

I am wretched, but Sarti is here with an excellent orchestra and fine music. Sometimes we have no bread, but we have biscuits and macaroons: no apples or pears, but pots of jam: no butter, but ices: no water, but every kind of wine: no wood for the kitchen, but logs of aloe to burn for perfume. We have Mme. Michel Potemkin, who is very beautiful, Mme. Shawrovski, another niece of the Grand Vizier and Patriarch (for he arranges his own religion) Potemkin, who also is charming, and Mme. Samoiloff, a still more beautiful niece. I played a charade for her in this desert. She liked it, for she said: 'Arrange another puzzle for me.'

I gave the Prince an animal that some fool sent me. The former is named Marolles, the other M. de X——, who recommends it to me as chief of the engineers, destined to take Oczakoff.

'Good day, General,' he said to the Prince, when he came in, 'I will have it for you within a fortnight. Have you any books here? Do you know those of M. Vauban, and of a certain Coehorn? I would like to look into them before I begin.'

Imagine the astonishment of Potemkin. 'What a man!' he said to me. 'I don't know if he is an engineer, but he is certainly French. Put him a few questions.' I did, and he acknowledged that he was a civil engineer.

My delight here is the Baron de Stad. But he also is very French, contradicting the Prince, displeasing everybody, composing charming poems, detesting the peevishness of Roger [Count Roger de Damas], with whom he is always quarrelling, turning out finely against the cannon, though he tells me he is half dead with fright. 'Look,' he said to me, 'how nature sympathizes. My horse trembles also. It has no more love of glory than I.' There is another man, as ridicu-

lous as his name—Gigandé, lieutenant of the guard of the Abbé de Porentruy. He was robbed yesterday. He was furious, and said, with his Swiss accent: 'I got up and went at once to complain to the general, and he said that, if it was a soldier, I should get the things back, but if it was an officer, it would be difficult.'

Another Frenchman, M. Second, came to consult me about a duel he had. 'I fear I will have to fight,' he said. I told him that, if he talked like that to everybody, he would not need another man of the same name. Fine, wasn't it?

Would you like to know one of my most innocent pleasures? I put my dromedaries in the way of the gilded troops when, once in a way, Marlborough is off to the war. The other day I had two or three generals down, and the escorting squadron was half killed.

Ah, Charles, when shall we meet at Stamboul or at Belœil? If the Emperor and my Russian general were not for paying compliments in passing the Save or the Bog, as if they were going through a door, we should soon bowl over the Sublime, and find ourselves where I said. Then, my dear Cineas, etc., etc. Meantime, let us love each other, wherever we are.

At this time the war had turned out badly for the Austrians. The early successes in Serbia were not repeated. The pest came, and Joseph II, falling ill, returned to Vienna. From there he summoned the Prince de Ligne. He wanted our hero and Marshal Laudon to take command of the offensive that was to be launched in the spring of 1789.

In the early days of the year Charles Joseph

and his son left Vienna for Belgrad, the siege of which began. Ligne flung himself heart and soul into his work, and fell ill. After some months of siege, and while Brown was taking the town, the Prince made a "decisive" diversion with his flotilla on the Danube.

> I directed the battle from my window, in spite of a diabolical attack of fever, and, after half killing myself by shouting to an Italian in command of my frigate, the *Maria Theresa*, 'Alla larga,' and other words which I dare not write, I finished by winning my funny naval battle. Belgrad fell on October 8, 1789.

The Emperor, in a cold letter which Ligne could not understand, apprised him that he was appointed a Commander of the Order of Maria Theresa. It was supposed at Vienna that the conqueror of Belgrad had given countenance to the revolt in Belgium.

About the end of 1789, Charles Joseph brought from Slavonia a wing of the Austrian Army in Silesia and Moravia to watch the Prussian troops. The son Charles was wounded at the siege of Ismailoff, and Catherine gave him the title of Commander of the Cross of St. George and the rank of colonel in the Russian Army.

The war, which Catherine had begun without the shadow of an excuse on the part of Turkey, ended badly. When Joseph II died (February 10, 1790), Austria was in an in-

extricable situation. Prussia was allied with Turkey, Belgium in complete revolt, Hungary beginning to rebel. The Russians, more indolent than ever, refused to sign the peace with Turkey, and protested that Austria had no right to sign without them. But the war, which was so onerous for Austria, had to cease as soon as possible. Leopold II, Joseph's successor, opened negotiations with Germany. On July 22, 1790, the Prince de Reuss and Baron de Spielhem signed, on behalf of Austria, the Peace of Reichenbach (*status quo* in the East, some modification of frontiers, and an understanding on Belgian affairs).

Russia continued the war. It ended, with no advantage to her, at Jassy, January 9, 1792.

CHAPTER VII

THE REVOLUTION IN BELGIUM

While the Russo-Austro-Turkish War dragged on, the position of the Empire in the Netherlands had become very precarious. Joseph II, with the best intentions, had not been able to give effect to them in his Belgian provinces. At his accession he had cleared the Netherlands of certain parts occupied by the Dutch in virtue of the Barrier Treaty, and he then tried to free the Scheldt from Dutch tutelage. He did not succeed, and obtained only an indemnity of ten million florins.

While, however, the new Emperor soon won sympathy by his efforts at economic reform, he alienated it again in connection with religious questions. Joseph II began with his *Edict of Tolerance* (1781), "proclaiming liberty of worship and the enjoyment of civil and political rights by dissenters," and he went on to the edicts of 1782, 1783 and 1784, "instituting civil marriage and divorce, suppressing useless monasteries

(contemplative orders) and confiscating their property for what he called a Religious Fund, for supporting schools and works of charity." He forbade the bishops to continue to correspond directly with Rome, or to publish their pastorals without Government authorization. He further wanted to suppress the episcopal seminaries and replace them by a "General Seminary" at Louvain and a "Filial Seminary" at Luxembourg: both under State control and obligatory for every aspirant to the priesthood. Then came in succession the regulation of Masses, the costumes of monks and nuns, the number of candles, funerals, and the unification of festivals.

From the administrative point of view Joseph II sought the centralization of power and of institutions. A General Governor of the Netherlands replaced the collateral councils, and the country was divided into nine zones, which were subdivided into districts. He created sixty-four lower courts and two courts of appeal, and a sovereign council for the whole of the Netherlands; and he suppressed torture, etc.

One can imagine what an outburst these wise reforms would provoke in such a clerical and traditional country. Volunteers were enrolled. The national flag was unfurled. In face of this revolt the General Governor, in panic, "declared null and void all dispositions contrary to the charters of the country."

Summoned at once to Vienna by the Emperor, who was furious at this arrogation of power, he was replaced by a plenipotentiary minister, Trauttmandorff, and a military commander, D'Alton. A little later Joseph agreed to suspend his politico-judiciary reform, but he would listen to no compromise on the religious question.

In January 1789 the States of Brabant and Hainaut refused subsidies. Joseph himself put the match to the powder by tearing up the Charter of Hainaut and the "Joyeuse Entrée" of Brabant. On October 24th Van der Noot publicly declared the end of the reign of Joseph II, and soon the troops collected by him and Vonck, in Holland and Liège, entered Belgium under the command of Van der Meersch. The Austrians were confined to the extreme south of Luxembourg. On December 17th the Revolutionary Committee entered Brussels, and the United States of Belgium were proclaimed.

The country split at once into two parties: the followers of Van der Noot were for the sovereignty of the States, the Vonckists for a more democratic organization. The clergy and Conservatives were of the former party, and oppressed the Vonckists. Leopold II, Joseph's successor, tried to take advantage of the division and make peace, on condition that the Emperor's authority was admitted. The States, counting on the support of England, Prussia, and Holland,

refused. But Prussia, which had signed peace with Austria, including the condition that it should give no aid to the Belgian insurrection, would not listen to the request of the States. England and Holland followed its prudent example, and the Provinces asked, and obtained, a few days for consideration. It ended in their offering the crown to Archduke Charles, third son of Leopold I.

Then, on November 26, 1790, Bender led Austrian troops into Belgium, and after a few unimportant engagements, entered Brussels on December 2nd. On the 10th the Triple Alliance (Prussia, England and Holland) guaranteed Leopold II the possession of the Low Countries. The Emperor, in return, confirmed the earlier religious and administrative status in Belgium.

These events were to have a material influence on the fortunes of the Ligne family. First, in 1787, the Princesses, the mother and daughter-in-law, left Belœil for Vienna.[1] As to the Prince de Ligne, who certainly did not favour the rising in the Netherlands—we remember his famous reply: "I never rebel in winter"—his excessive freedom of thought led to his being equally disliked in Vienna and Brussels. We

[1] From Vienna Hélène set out, she said, to visit her uncle Massalski. It was really to join Count Potocki, and she presently asked Charles to divorce her. On his side, the young man found in Vienna a tenderness which his wife had never shown him.

must acknowledge that his contradictions must have disconcerted both friends and enemies. We see this in a letter he sent on January 3, 1790, to his secretary, Sauveur-Legros, and other letters which we give here in succession. We will consider their authenticity later:

Are you still alive, my dear Legros? Or have you died of grief at witnessing such horrors, or of laughing at such follies? It seems to me that MM. D'Alton and Trauttmandorff have done enough of these things for you. There ought to be a statue raised to each of them in the park, for they could not have done better if they had been paid by Van der Noot, who has certainly shown spirit and genius. I should like to know the names of all the officers who have been cowardly or cruel. These things are unworthy of Walloons, and I have influence enough to get them dismissed from the army. Why did not those who deserted ask to be released? It could not have been refused. My heart bleeds when I hear of the frightful scenes of burning and massacring on both sides. There should only be humanity, valour, and moderation.

A curious letter. Here is another, addressed to the Princess:

It used to be said that we are in revolt. This time it is not said: it is done, and in a way that does honour both to the conception and the execution. It was fine of our nation to drive out the Austrians with equal humanity and valour, and cover half a dozen generals with shame. The tranquillity that has reigned since the dissolution of the States must have been horrible to the silly and cruel Governor-General; and I remember that the Duc d'Ussel and I, when we read the stupid gazettes, ridiculed this nascent army....

But when I saw the fine manœuvre of Van der Mersch at Turnhout, the splendid passage of the Scheldt, and the brave attack on Ghent, I admired the spirit of Van der Noot, the prime mover in it all, it seems to me, as the heart and great talent of Van der Mersch. Brussels ought to raise two statues, to D'Alton and Trauttmandorff. I have here two portraits of these gentlemen, whose frightful conduct, from the military, political, and humane point of view, did more for this revolution than the Princes of Orange did for the other. Ferdinand Trauttmandorff, with his stupid letters, showed himself narrow-minded and disloyal to his master when he wanted to restore the States, the day after they were dissolved, with certain changes, and in representing to him that the King of France had lost his throne by a similar act of weakness.

But D'Alton is a monster, and I have this year addressed a formal complaint against him to the Council of War, in spite of any unpleasantness it may cause me. It ought to be enough to secure his recall.

Finding myself almost at the head of the army, and commanding large bodies for two years, my career is, as you will understand, too far advanced for me to quit the service. I will be neither treacherous nor ungrateful; and it would not please my nation if I were. I will not serve against it, nor with it against the Emperor. But I will serve my country to the last drop of my blood against the other Powers of Europe.

Immediately after this, on January 26, 1790, he writes to Van den Broucke:

If my poor Charles is not killed at Ismael, where he distinguishes himself too much, every day, gaining more honour than the D'Arembergs, the Ursels, Walchens, Vonckists, Vandernootists, Schönpels, Köhlers, Lannoys, and that ass Mérode, we will presently settle

our affairs, with your counsel and friendship, at the end of April, at Belœil.

The Belgian lion has proved a sheep.

It is because Hainaut behaved more reasonably than the other provinces that I hope it will have spirit enough to demand me for its Grand Baillie.

We must admit that in these three letters the contradictions are at least flagrant. M. Gachard questions the authenticity of the letter to the Princesse de Ligne; M. Hubert, who published it in his *Annales*, seems to differ. The latter is content to point out that "the opinions expressed by the Prince do not agree with what he wrote to Marshal de Lacy in December." When we recall that the letter to the Princess was published in the *Journal de Bruxelles* (January 28, 1790), a paper devoted to the revolutionary movement, can anyone regard this as true? As to the message sent to Van den Broucke, it is more plausible, not from the point of view of the text, which is in express contradiction to the ideas of our hero, but because Van den Broucke kept it in a collection entitled *Maison de Ligne* (in the Ghent University Library, 27 quarto volumes); and Van den Broucke must have been familiar with the hand of the Prince and his secretary. Now read this letter to Prince Kaunitz, and the absurdity of the letter to the Princess will be seen still more clearly:

Pardon, Prince; if I venture to speak to you of these things, it is because I have seen the northern storms that are coming: because, since France supported a revolution in America, and terrified Holland, it gets one itself; because, thanks to the imbecility of the Generals in the Low Countries, who do not know that, instead of shutting themselves in towns, they should win respect by going out with mortars and menaces; because I think we must return a little if this cursed revolutionary spirit is not to win.

Then he writes to the Emperor of Austria:

I beg your pardon, Sire, for not being anxious about incurring your anger.[1] It is because I am more familiar with your justice. I told myself that a journey which one of my officers made, tactlessly, to the Low Countries, at the height of the revolt, has possibly led Your Majesty to think that I had something to do with it, and that I was in communication with the malcontents.

Elsewhere he adds:

If I were there [in insurgent Flanders], I should speak as a patriot—a word which is beginning to be odious to me—and as a citizen—another much abused word. And if I did not succeed thus, I should use the language of an Austrian General, and lock up an archbishop, a bishop, a fat monk, a professor, a brewer, and a lawyer.

His perfect loyalty to the Austrian Court, his freedom from revolutionary ideas, are also

[1] It is 'possible that the temporary displeasure of the Emperor was also due to the fact that Louis Eugene Lamoral, Ligne's second son,' had seized Waes and the city of Ghent under orders from Van der Mersch.

brilliantly confirmed by this letter which Joseph II wrote him when he was dying:

I was not in a condition to see you yesterday. Your country has killed me. The taking of Ghent was my agony: the abandonment of Brussels my death. . . . I should have to be made of wood to feel otherwise. I thank you for all you have done for me. Laudon has said many good things about you. I thank you for your fidelity. Go to the Low Countries. Bring them back to their sovereign. If you cannot, stay there. Do not sacrifice your interests to me. You have children.

Finally, if we remember all the thrusts in the *Memoirs* against revolutionaries, we cannot doubt that the letters quoted above are forgeries.

Joseph II died on February 20, 1790, and was succeeded by his brother Leopold II. The new Court displayed an unjust coldness toward Ligne, who was guilty only of clairvoyance and sincerity. Elected Grand Baillie of Hainaut in 1789, in succession to Count Valentin, Charles Joseph, whom events did not yet justify in discharging his functions, was ordered to rejoin his Government on May 21, 1791. On the way, at Coblentz, he found the French King's brother and the Marquis de Bouillé, who told him of the flight of Louis XVI. He says:

It was a touching sight for me to see Monsieur reach Coblentz and to reunite the French of the Prince de Condé with those of the Comte d'Artois. I advised them to march back into France next day, almost

unarmed, and, if they had none, to establish communication with some frontier fortress. France was saved.

The refugees did not follow his advice. He imagined that the revolution at Paris was like that in Belgium, as we see by these lines addressed to the Comte d'Artois :

I have a little sovereignty half an hour's ride from Mariembourg, a French fortress. Let it be escaladed during the night, with the cry, 'Vive le Roi!' The commanders of the other fortresses will be afraid, and the counter-revolution established.

The " little sovereignty " was merely Fagnolles, a poor village of two hundred and seventy-one souls and a château. We remember that at an earlier date Ligne had urged Jean Jacques to take shelter there.

On August 8, 1791, Ligne, in his capacity of Grand Baillie, made his entry into Mons. The banquet cost the city no less than 9,895 *livres*, and from the first the Grand Baillie drew 10,000 florins from his functions. Well received by the officials generally, the Prince did not fail, nevertheless, to catch a discordant note :

I have no complaint against anybody, but I remember a libel which a certain Masson (I believe), a sort of lawyer at Nivelles, wrote against me. I had great difficulty in saving him from punishment, but he took the precaution of leaving the country for some months : which proves, even better than his little book, that he did not know me.

Amongst other things, which I have forgotten, it

was said in this libel (the only writing of the kind I can remember, for there was never a song or an epigram in circulation against me) that a dressmaker at St. Petersburg named Chotuzoff had had me thrown out of the window, that I was a bit of a coward, and that, when I entered Hainaut as Governor, I looked like an elderly sultan surrounded by girls to whom I gave all my attention, and that I had been so stupid as to take at its face-value the cry of 'Long live the Patriot Prince!' The last point is true. It was in a church, where I was taking or receiving some oath. I accepted this cheer with the others, supposing that the shouter was sincere. As to the Sultan, he did me too much honour. It is true that during the rather wearisome procession pretty girls threw bouquets into my carriage, and, as the crowd pressed them near the door, I thanked them warmly, and told them that I thought them charming. As to cowardice, the gentleman was wrong. And as to Mme. Chotuzoff—a name I know only because there is a general of that name—I don't know where the devil he got his bitch of a story. He does not say who threw me out of the window, and what I had done to deserve it. Certain great ladies, and the need to spend most of my time at the Court, had not left me much leisure for adventures of this sort. The gentleman was wrong.

The only charge that might not be entirely without foundation was that, as he said, my entry seemed to him rather bizarre than magnificent. The war and the revolution, which had cost me much, were just over. I might have borrowed money and rigged out my men in fine style; but I thought the people would respect me for not showing too much luxury. And as I had two Turks, four hussars, several bearded Russians, and a Tartar with two dromedaries, this may have inspired his ingenious comparison with Tamerlane or a Chinese Emperor. I do not remember who else he said I resembled.

During the summer of 1791 the revolutionary storm had moved further away, and the Prince haunted his beloved Belœil. At Tournai he was most warmly greeted by the French refugees, who had come together for the blessing of the standards of the Walloon Ligne Dragoons :

> At Tournai, again, I had a touching and very pleasant experience in the theatre. The play was *Richard Cœur de Lion*. They saw me in my box deeply moved by the air : 'O Richard, O my King,' and they applauded me vociferously. Old and young French dames rushed out of their boxes. The whole house, consisting of young French officers, who took the theatre by storm, cried incessantly : 'Long live the King ! Long live the Prince de Ligne ! ' I was overcome.

There was the same stormy reception at Ath. The horses were taken out of his carriage, and the men drew it. At Belœil, there were fifty-four refugees in the château and the village. The clerk Durien, financial agent of the estate, wrote to Van den Broucke :

> His Highness seems to want the French to remain here all winter. The innkeeper of the Grand Bâtiment demands thirteen *patars* a head to feed them, and two for lodging. His Highness tells me that the two for lodging are to be put to his account.

Generally speaking, the invasion of the refugees was not regarded with much sentiment :

> They wanted to find room in some of the bourgeois houses, but did not succeed except at the house of

the Mlles. Gonties. There is nothing to fear there. They are strong girls.

The Prince, naturally, thought and acted differently from his compatriots. For three months, Mons, Baudour, and Belœil resounded with the festivals he offered "to the interesting young nobles, of both sexes, of the unfortunate nation." At last the guests left Belœil. Charles Joseph at once packed up and went to Vienna, without further thought of his governorship.

The year 1792 was to be fateful for our hero. Belgium was conquered by the French. Belœil had to be definitely deserted. The Prince was ruined, and had henceforward to lead a quiet life at Vienna. Worst of all, his beloved eldest son Charles was to meet his death.

Leopold II, though he was disposed to help Marie Antoinette, was in no hurry to take the offensive, and he did not conceal a certain distrust of the refugees. His death (March 1, 1792) and the accession of Francis II were to make a drastic change in Austrian policy.[1] The Emperor soon became so aggressive that, on April 20, 1792, the Legislative Assembly at Paris declared war on Austria. On November 6th Dumouriez won his brilliant victory at Jemappes, and, cleverly exploiting

[1] As Commissary of His Majesty, on June 10, 1792, Charles de Ligne assisted at the inauguration of the reign of Francis II, at Mons. The enemy were at the gates of the city.

the state of mind of the Belgians, the French general proclaimed the freedom of the Scheldt and prohibited any foreign intrusion in the internal politics of the Netherlands. The battle of Neerwinden won back the Belgian provinces for Austria, but in 1794 Jourdan secured their definitive independence at Fleurus. Ligne had returned, on May 19, 1793, to exercise his functions as Grand Baillie of Hainaut for the last time. From the Governors of the province he demanded the restoration of the privileges of his rank, as it seemed to him a propitious moment for the restoration of the "happy old regime." Fleurus drove him finally out of Belgium.

His son Charles was in the army of the Duke of Brunswick. He had shown himself singularly clear-headed, and had no illusions about the quality of their opponents. He wrote:

> We begin to be tired of the war, in which the refugees promise us more butter than bread. We have to fight troops of the line who never desert, national troops which remain intact. Armed peasants fire on us, or murder any man they find alone or sleeping in a house. . . . The weather is abominable. It rains in torrents, and the roads are so impracticable that at present we cannot move our cannons. Then there is famine. . . . Our shoes and hats are rotten, and our men begin to be ill. The villages are deserted, and afford neither vegetables nor brandy nor flour. I do not know what we will do, or what will become of us.

Ordered by his General, Clerfayt, on September 13, 1792, to attack the passage of the

Croix au Bois, which commanded a defile in Argonne, he succeeded, but he was killed next day during the Republican counter-offensive. His body was buried at Belœil. All who knew him, except his wife, wept. His will directed the sale of his pictures and stamps, which he valued at 100,000 florins. Four-fifths of the result was to be given to his natural daughter Christine, whom the Prince de Ligne loved. He had her legitimized, and she later married Count Maurice O'Donnel. The rest of Charles's fortune went to a Turkish child he had adopted at Ismael.

Ligne's grief was unutterable. He writes:

> Alas, I would not, or could not, understand the Marshal when he uttered the dreadful word: 'Dead.' I believe that saved my life. I fell in a faint, and he almost carried me in his arms. I still see the spot where the Marshal told me that my poor Charles had been killed. I see my poor Charles himself, putting his dear lips to mine every day at the same hour. I had dreamed a fortnight earlier that he had been mortally wounded in the head, and that he had fallen from his horse, dead. I was restless for five or six days, and, as people treat as a weakness what is often a warning, or a natural presentiment, when there is an affinity in the blood, I drove away the fatal thought; but it was only too sadly verified on the morrow.

It is all over with our hero's frivolity. Long after the death of his son he wept when he heard his name.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RISE OF NAPOLEON

CHARLES JOSEPH would have needed some great satisfaction—in the battlefield, for instance—to enable him to forget the distress which had fallen upon his life. He began to dream of serving Marie Antoinette, delivering her from her odious prison, dying for her. But he could not obtain the employment which he deserved. There were many who would never forgive his raillery, his remorseless spirit. Prince Albert and the Archduchess Maria Christina, for instance, did not forget this story:

> I have also to confess a rather bad joke which I played on him [Prince Albert], though, happily, few people have heard of it. He asked me, the first day I saw him after the battle of Jemappes, which he had lost, if I found him changed by a sickness which it had brought on. I said: 'I think you still look rather defeated, Monseigneur.'

Again, Thugut, the Austrian minister, did not carry the image of Ligne in his heart:

What prevented me from being employed in the last war was saying, when they gave the Spanish favourite, Godoy, the name of Prince de la Paix, that Thugut was the hero of the war. It got round so much, and was so true (as he had refused all the favourable conditions which France proposed), that he has never forgiven me; or for saying: 'Baron Thugut is like the Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin in the last two lines of their portrait in the *Henriade*—

> Richelieu, great, sublime, implacable foe,
> Mazarin, simple, cunning, and dangerous friend.'

I must reproach myself with not having taken all the steps that were necessary. . . . The first time, a woman made me promise not to ask for the command of the army in Italy. I agreed because at the time I wanted to regard as vile what I could really have done very nobly. It is said that the Grand Vizier [Thugut] did not expect that. I was not his man. I would not have taken an adjutant. I would not have let coxcombs and lackeys make my plans—the men who, taking news to the Vizier, shut themselves up with him in the vault of intrigue, and then brought out a plan of operations. If I have not been very successful, I may reply that the enemy did not have much success, and that the spirit of the army was preserved.

This did not prevent me from offering my services with, or under, anybody they liked. It does not prevent me from awaiting the battle that may yet come, in which I may end and adorn my career.

I have since learned that Lord Grenville, being at Berlin at the time when Belgium was troubled, two years before it was taken, had sent a message to our Vizier, asking him to put me at the head of the Rhine army. He was sent away, and the Emperor was not even told of it.

On another occasion Count Castellaper asked for

me on behalf of his master, the King of Sardinia, who wanted someone of Laudon's school, as he was dissatisfied with the other Austrian generals. He wanted me, and he offered me the same patents and instructions as the Emperor. Thugut smiled pleasantly, as if about to consent, then changed the conversation, and bowed. 'What have you done?' Castellaper was asked next day by the Chevalier Eden, who thought he was one of the triumvirate with Razoumoffsky and the Vizier, who laughed at them: 'They are vexed with us. It is said that you have an idea of giving the command to the Prince de Ligne, who would exterminate the armies of Austria and Piedmont in a single campaign.'

His spirit begins to droop. The amiable noble of earlier years seems to wish to efface himself altogether:

I have broken the dearest idol of my heart—glory. I have resolved never to fire another shot. . . . I laughed and cried when I saw at the head of our armies in Italy and the Low Countries four poor ignoramuses whom I have had under my command. To none of them, except Clerfay, would I have given the command of three battalions. Of all the political marionettes who have appeared on the stage of this war the best would be Clerfay, if the dread of responsibility did not so frequently paralyse his ample resources.

The Vienna Court hardly remembered that Ligne had been a friend of Joseph II. Favourite succeeded favourite. In reduced circumstances, the poor gentleman was compelled to sell Parthenizza and Nikita to Count Zuboff, Governor of the Crimea. Catherine, knowing his situation,

had discreetly suggested the sale to him. On February 27, 1794, Ligne wrote to Catherine :

MADAME,

I have again had occasion to see that Your Imperial Majesty understands everything. If all my stewards served me so well, I should be twice as rich as I am. Her way is to give, purchase, regive, sell, repurchase, lend, and give. She has made some good speculations in this sort of trade, and the result is to enrich herself by enriching others, to pour a shower of benefactions upon her Empire.

I am very pleased with the share I received, as I passed, in the shape of diamonds, rings, furs, dressing-gowns, estates, etc. Here, for instance, is a good piece of business for the Grand Master of Artillery [Count Zuboff] and myself. But he does not know that I am a trickster. I must be, to play tricks on one who never played a trick on anybody, as everybody speaks well of her. I feel that I am in danger of loving all that I know of her.

Let the Grand Master of Artillery know, then, that I crossed the sea with the water up to my waist, to scratch upon a rock the divine name of Catherine the Great and the human name of the lady of my thoughts at that time (I ask Your Majesty's pardon, but this is in such small letters that it can easily be effaced). Your Imperial Majesty may see this rock in the drawing I gave her of Parthenizza, and in which there are sketches of plans for buildings I would have raised, had it not been for Jussuf Pasha (to whom Russia is under such obligations for the augmentation of its glory).

I wish and demand that this rock shall be known as the 'Ligne Rock.' No middle man. That is how I learned at a certain Court to proceed.

His Majesty the Emperor [Joseph II], of glorious and eternal memory (as your Majesty so well says in

speaking of your worthy friend), had promised me vines from Tokai. I feel sure that our beloved and esteemed [Russian] Ambassador, Count Razumoffski, being devoted to Count Zuboff, will do all he can to get some for him if he wishes ; if it is not now impossible.

If the ingenious and virtuous Selim [the Sultan] compelled Your Majesty to go to Constantinople, I would go and wear there the three buttons on the sleeve of the green coat which I still have, and which I love with my whole heart. My 'Rock' gives me the right to wear the handsome green velvet and silver, and I have also my Catharinoslav uniform. Or I may arrange for a colony in what belongs to me on the Borysthene, when I go to throw myself at the feet of Your Imperial Majesty ; when western Europe has got out of its troubles.

They are making plans of campaign, but I fear that before they can cross the seas, the Rhine, and the Danube, the regicides will cross the Meuse, the Sambre, and the Lys in three great masses, at three remote points, before troops have been collected for preventing them by making a Russian descent on the entrenched camp at Maubeuge : a thing I have begged them to do all the winter, while the infamous carmagnolists were massed on the Rhine and in Vendée. But I passed to the Senate two years ago.

My kingdom is not of this world, and I do not desire it to be ; for it would in that case be necessary for things to go very badly, and there would have to be a fourth campaign to seek me—since I do not know how to present myself.

If Your Imperial Majesty has any influence with Count Anhalt, I beg you to use it for me, for I am writing to ask a favour for the Prince de Kaunitz, two Count Cobentzls, and myself. Your Majesty will have to get up early to catch him, and will have to have your name announced to get an audience.

I have only one further favour to ask of my sovereign :

that she will be pleased that I do not take the liberty of writing to her whenever I desire to do so, and will continue in my regard the only kindliness which is precious to my heart. It has the same sentiments as fourteen years ago. The sentiment of admiration has been there for thirty years; but to it are added gratitude, the warmest of enthusiasms, adoration, and the loyal and respectful devotion with which I have the honour to be Your Imperial Majesty's most humble and faithful subject,

LIGNE.

At this time Charles Joseph was living quietly at Vienna, in his small hotel, Mölkerbastar.

My little house, rose-coloured like my ideas, is the only one that is open at Vienna.[1] I have six covers at dinner, five at supper. Anybody comes who likes, and sits where he can. Sometimes, when the sixty persons who visit me come in large numbers, my straw-bottomed chairs are not enough. They have to stand, and move about, as on a lawn, until some have gone away. There are always some good talkers amongst the strangers. We talk about Poland, Russia, England, a little about Italy, a little about the old France, not at all about the new.

On the first floor was the bedroom-library, where Rousseau, Vauban, Voltaire, La Harpe, Molière, and Casanova stood side by side. Every morning the master arranged his notes, fixed a desk on his couch, wrote, re-arranged, and wrote again.

[1] In a letter to Sauveur-Legros, he says: "At present I am careful to tell my people, if at any time I give a tea at any of my places, that it must be in the simple and natural form, without ices, cakes, and fruit, except prunes, which are the cheapest fruit."

Often—several times a week—our hero went out in an old carriage, "known to the whole city, drawn by two ancient, panting horses." Behind the carriage was a Turk, a swarthy old man. It was Ismael, who had taken care of the little Norokos, the child saved by Prince Charles at the battle of Ismail. He worshipped his aged master. The old carriage would lumber to "My Refuge," at Leopoldsberg, a former monastery, founded by Ferdinand II and suppressed by Joseph II. Leopold II had given it to Ligne. On one side of it the Prince had put the family motto: on the other, facing the Danube, these two lines (in verse):

> Without remorse or regret, without fear or envy
> I watch this river flow, and my life flow away.

There is a wall of my charming house at Kaltenberg on which is the initial of the woman I love, and who loves me. I always think she is the latest. This time, it certainly is. It is a J——. Now it is another letter. There is a clock; and I often change the time when I am happy. I shall never change it again. I am getting old. Probably it is the end of my fine career which this last passion adorns; and my wall will be marked no more. Already all the other letters are effaced, and the clock marks half-past five, the hour when I visit the heavenly creature to whom I am attached for life. I will write no more.

This gift of a house from the Emperor, the sale of his Crimean estates, and the remains of a large fortune hardly gave the aged lion even a decent mediocrity. In 1795 he found himself

obliged to contract with Walther Brothers, of Dresden, for the publication of his *Military, Literary, and Sentimental Miscellanies.* "I laugh," he tells Sauveur-Legros, "when, with the aid of a lie or two, I succeed in selling a few copies of my voluminous works." The cruel irony of the phrase would make one weep.

On January 1, 1795, the Prince wrote the Preface to his *Posthumous Works*:

I will not await the approach of death to write my will. I never liked business during my life, and will not begin at its close. In fact, I have none to attend to. I beg Walther Brothers, into whose hands I direct all my manuscripts to be given, to do all they can, so that my servants may receive the same wages as long as they live.

If any school of surgery wants to buy me from my dear Louis, it will give me pleasure, for I have nothing to leave him except myself; and in this way my burial would cost him nothing.

If I absolutely must be buried, I pray the Austrian State to see to it, and to let me have all the honours of war due to my rank, especially a large number of military instruments, Turkish music, etc. Let it be in the cemetery of the Camaldulese, on the hill at Kaltenberg. I would like a pretty little wooden rail, rose-coloured, round the grave, a little path, and, between eight pines, a tomb of black marble, as long as my body, with this inscription in gold letters:

DEAR TO HIS CHILDREN AND HIS SOLDIERS,
CATHERINE, LACY, AND FREDERICK ESTEEMED HIM.

VIENNA, *January* 1, 1795. LIGNE.

If at the close of this foolishly conducted war, the

peace were by any chance to restore my fortune, it would go to my Louis, to whose good heart, which I know, I recommend his mother, sisters, and people: and also Belœil, which I would like him to keep up as I leave it to him.

On another black stone in some corner of this little garden, which must be well kept in flowers in each season, this must be carved:

LEAVING THIS WORLD AND ITS FOLLY WITHOUT REGRET, LIGNE, IN THIS REST, BEGINS ANOTHER LIFE.

It did not seem to us of interest to deal at any length with the history of the Prince's children, except Charles. We noted the births and marriages as they occurred. We have to add that of Euphémie, who, on September 11, 1798, married Jean Baptiste, eldest son of Count Palfy.

As to Louis Eugène Lamoral, after the Lunéville Peace (April 9, 1803), he, sharing the ideas of his father, was naturalized as a Frenchman, sacrificing, when he ceased to be Austrian, his right of voting and being present at the College of Princes of the Germanic Empire, and all his titles and decorations. His father, on the other hand, having repudiated the offer of French nationality (Belgium being under the domination of Bonaparte), surrendered his property in France to his children. The confiscation passed upon Belœil and the Ligne estates was annulled, though the woods and forests remained under the control of the Forestry Department.

The decree of the First Consul (6 Brumaire, Year XII) was accepted at Vienna by Charles Joseph de Ligne on October 18, 1804, and by his son at Brussels on 12 Brumaire, Year XII. Eugène, who lived at Brussels, had married Louise Josephine Van der Noot de Duras, and they had several children. When he died, the widow married Charles Ferdinand d'Oultremont.

As indemnity for the loss of Fagnolles the Prince got the Abbaye d'Edelsteten and the 126th virile vote in the College of Princes of the Empire, in May 1803. The new estate yielded him 16,000 florins a year. A year later he sold it to Prince Esterhazy for 1,400,000 florins.

As to the sparkling Hélène Massalska, widow of Charles de Ligne, she married her lover, Count Vincent Potocki, whom he had driven to get a divorce. She had children, who died, and she manœuvred so well that she reconciled her ex-father-in-law (1805), and ended by marrying her daughter, Sidonie de Ligne, to François Potocki, son of Count Vincent and Anna Mycieloka. The Prince was present at the wedding on September 8, 1807.

It remains only to recall the names of those who lent a final diversity to the age of the Prince: Mme. de Krudener, Napoleon, Mme. de Staël, and the very charming Mme. Eynard.

Juliana de Wietenghoff, Baroness de Krudener,

"the celebrated Russian writer and mystic," as the biographers say, had, in 1803, written an autobiographical novel, to which Ligne wrote a sequel, of no interest. She had been expelled from Catholic countries, which she disturbed by her heterodox teaching and her liberality. She had a real sympathy for Ligne. The *Annals of the Prince de Ligne* have given us parts of a letter which she wrote to Mlle. de Stourdza:

I have at Vienna an old sinner who appeals to my heart. I have such everywhere, but this is the Prince de Ligne. He used to call me 'the nun of the heart,' and we used to love each other. Do you see him? Doubtless you do. He is very good at heart. I am so dead to everything in this world that he must dread me now like the dead. But neither his fears nor his laughter would matter to me if I could only bring him to the life which saves from eternal death. There were moments when his conscience troubled him. I know that he then wanted to see me a Catholic; and I wanted to see him a Christian.

The following letter will show that the nun of the heart, so dead to everything, had an excellent command of gallantry in language:

Happily, my heart is not yet affected by this general indifference to all that makes one truly live. Happily, I can still love all that is lovable; and you will see that then my ideas naturally turn toward the Prince de Ligne, who charms everybody that can think and feel.

A pretty compliment. Our Prince, to whom the letter was addressed, must have found it in good taste.

The great figure of Napoleon was bound to impress Ligne. It was in 1807 that he saw the Emperor for the first time:

It is to the roar of the cannon of a great battle that I let you know that Napoleon celebrates to-day, at the expense of the King of Prussia, the anniversary of Ulm and Mack, as I foresaw a fortnight ago.

I had foreseen, after this terrible Ulm, the loss of the remainder of our monarchy. I have a score of witnesses that I foresaw the Tilsit peace precisely as it occurred; though I had not foreseen that Alexander and Napoleon would embrace each other so tenderly.

This new feature, this taste for interviews in which he takes the measure of monarchs and generals, confirms all that I said about his way of playing—of playing with men, in general and particular. I cry, still more: 'What sort of a man is this?'

The coquetry, the charm, which he displayed on the raft on which they met must make any man tremble who is liable to be squeezed into convulsions by these two great strangling colossi. His restoration of Poland is a master-stroke, because it threatens Austria and Russia, if his young Cabinet proves as versatile as he has been for the last four years.

Well, I saw him, this dethroner of kings, stepping out of his carriage, with the dust of the battle, the camp, and the journey on him. He goes up the steps of the palace at Dresden with a fair military grace, and with the air of nobility which war gives so much better than parchments. Often it is insolence and contempt of men that give it to the monarchs who are accustomed to it. His well poised, swarthy head, his firm and calm look, as if thinking of the last battle he won, pleased me immensely.

Next day I was not so pleased, because he tried to soften it with a forced smile, a supposed look of bene-

volence, with which he honoured the crowd I stood amongst, in the picture gallery, to see him comfortably. The public is respectable, I said to myself, and deserves a grateful look for its enthusiasm. One does this when one is moved, kindly and friendly, when one is born so; but none of this false kindliness. It is either too patronizing or too familiar. These are shades which, without their knowing it, perhaps, I have seen in Frederick II, Catherine II, and Joseph II.

Mlle. Kind, the prettiest person in Dresden, who stood near me in the privileged group, said to me: 'How gentle he looks!' 'He's a sheep,' I said.

My neighbours and I were quite close to him for a couple of hours, following him about, and up and down stairs, as a man follows his lover at a ball. I heard a few insignificant remarks, a few questions about pictures, to which he seemed to pay no attention. With his glasses he looked at the battle and historical pictures, rather than at the best pictures; and I am equally sure that it was merely for people to notice it, and that I was the only one who saw his intention.

Another trait for my portrait, I then said. This devil of a man does nothing for nothing. The intonation of his words is not noble. I can hear him from here saying at Tilsit (if he did say it), in a tone of voice which he certainly does not use in battles and business: 'So, Prince Constantine, you are bored here. No girls and no theatre, eh!' I wager that he said that with his sardonic candour and gaiety.

This same man, coming here from Königsberg in a little more than three days and four nights, was at work every moment at Dresden. He dictated in two hours the revolutionary changes in the Duchy of Poland and the Kingdom of Westphalia; and, by his kindly reception, he humiliated the Confederated Princes, whom he calls his allies, but who are his slaves. I said to them: 'You look as if you were going to the Valley of Josaphat for the Last Judgment.'

This man travelled to Paris in four days and a half, stopping several hours on the way—an incredible thing—and set to work at once, on horseback, as if he had never left Paris, which was being decorated by twenty thousand workmen while he was leading I do not know how many hundred thousand men to war. . . .

Meantime, a bear in private, a fox at business, a chameleon, proteus, and lion by turns, he has seduced the Emperor of Russia, just as he had seduced his father, by a feigned admiration of the bravery of his troops and the noble discharge and good treatment of his prisoners.

He charmed this Alexander, and pretended that he was himself charmed; and this has made him the flail of Europe more than ever. He may conquer the rest, but not make war on it, as Prussia is in ruins and Austria surrounded on every side.

I forgot to say that, if England does not make peace, I fancy the Hannibal of the Alps will become the Cæsar of the ocean. Building a fleet, and sacrificing, perhaps, fifty thousand men in successive partial landings, he will succeed with another fifty thousand, will ruin the Bank, plant the French eagle on the Tower of London, and take ship home.

This Emperor is now thirty-eight. When he is forty, I will continue this, and will certainly have much to say.

After relating the interview which Napoleon had at Weimar with Goethe and Wieland in 1806, the Prince adds the following reflections, perhaps the most curious he ever wrote:

Napoleon can do everything except restrain himself. He uses wrong, and sometimes, foul words—when he swears, for instance. He said to some Flemish bishops or priests: 'If there were beasts or scum like you people elsewhere, I would make Europe Protestant.'

He asked the Duchess of Hildbourgshausen: 'What was your maiden name?' 'Mecklemburg,' she said. 'Ah, it is the same as your sister, La Tour. Your people were well educated. Who educated you? It is clear that the Princes of the Empire are fools, as they send their wives to me to do their business.'

After that, here is something good and strong. M. de Crillon having refused employment in the army, and asking for a civil position, he said: 'All right. I will give your name to someone else.'

Fouché, telling him that he suffered too many of the *émigrés* to come back, said: 'I believe you would let Louis XVIII come back.' 'Why not?' said Napoleon; 'he has never been under arms.'

He has spoken well of me and my works, objecting only that I should not put words into the mouths of great men, as they sometimes say things that ought not to be printed. He pretends that he saw me at Dresden, and he regretted the looting of my houses at Kaltenberg and Leopoldberg by his soldiers, the loss of my estates in France, the Empire, and Belgium; though, he said, 'he had probably got through a good deal of his fortune already.' His jokes do not console me. It is, moreover, not a coinage that circulates in the country in which he is.

Again, in a semi-official journal of the Empire, it was said, in regard to my supposed public correspondence with General Grunne, which annoyed him for some reason: 'The Prince de Ligne, who is known only for his excessive frivolity.'

Stupid! I have been told that he did not write it. As a matter of fact, Lauriston, to whom I had previously spoken about the harm his silly and indecent articles in the gazettes did him, told me that it came from men who thought they were echoing his sentiments, and that he, refraining from saying, writing, or doing these things like the others, had not been less well treated by Napoleon. Where shall we find a perfect man?

Napoleon might have been, if he had any soul. But he has genius alone.

I have, perhaps, already said elsewhere that he is neither a prince, nor a hero, nor a gentleman, nor a cavalier; and he is all the more dangerous on that account, for he meddles with everything. He is a gross *parvenu*, with stout body and square head, who prefers glory to honour, and who, by his studying the Greeks, Romans, history, and fable, is a prodigious being. He knows from Plutarch, Rollin, and Montesquieu that establishments and the broad roads, as well as the path of victory, lead to immortality.

Frederick the Great, who was all that I have said, and Napoleon is not, or was at least a prince and a hero, had some literary vanity. In this respect he talked much, but said nothing immoderate. Napoleon is a talker. He wants to talk in epigrams, and will have everything he says preserved. He is charged with crimes which he did not commit. He is not as bad as it is said: good internally, better and surer for those about him than Frederick. But he knows and despises men, particularly the French.

Being a Corsican he is more vindictive than Frederick. There is not a word that is not said also of Frederick. I defended him against the same fools who now declaim against Napoleon. There was not a village burned in Bohemia but it was laid to the charge of the King of Prussia.

Joseph II told me to direct the troops I commanded to beware of the water of poisoned wells, and I did not. If any man goes into the country, they say: 'Napoleon has got rid of him.' I care no more about the charges against him than I cared a jot, fifteen years ago, when I studied Hannibal, Scipio, Cæsar, Condé, and Turenne. It cost me something to avoid having a most interesting conversation with him. But I should have been made to talk, and, partly from malice, partly stupidity, I should have been accused of both,

which would have disturbed the tranquillity to which I am now devoted.

They make him more wicked than he is in accusing him of wickedness. His head is always at work. What will be the end? A universal monarchy over hearts, if he had a heart for anything but battles: a universal monarchy of Europe, if England does not make peace soon, in spite of its boasts, by means of population and trade, whatever may be said. Giving up Spain will leave Napoleon quite free to have everything he needs for a three weeks' campaign: run to the Bank, the Tower of London, the port, and the treasury, to confiscate its contents. He does what he likes with men. They become sailors, builders of fleets, or whatever he likes. So I do not see how war is to go on, at least in Europe and America.

What does he think about religion, either as conqueror or legislator? I know what is said. But a man brought up in the Catholic faith always retains something; and this will conquer him, if it cannot be conquered. Frederick died like a dog, and wished to be buried with those he had ruined. From Deism to Materialism is but a single step. One may recognize that, yet believe that the soul is not immortal. Unless one has the support of Catholicism, one may lose oneself in an infinity of vagaries on these questions.

If what I am writing about the Emperor is ever published, it will show my impartiality, and will be an excellent piece of history and painting.

In 1806 the Emperor of Austria, abandoning the injustice with which he had so long treated Ligne, raised him to the rank of Field-Marshal. He was even consulted on military operations, and was offered the Presidency of the Order of Maria Theresa. The preceding year he had become Captain of the Guard.

I like to make a show in the streets of Vienna, in the great ceremonies in which I replace the Grand Chamberlain. . . .

I arrange my collar and ribbons coquettishly, or make up what Roger de Damas neatly calls my 'bouquet of honour.' For the last fourteen years I have not used my uniform as Lieutenant-General. I wear that of my regiment. When, as Prince Chamberlain, I have the duty of carrying—or, rather, of holding—the Emperor's children at baptism, people ask me why, as the whole Court is in gala dress. I answer: 'I have become an archduke.' In the same way, not liking to ask to be made a Councillor of State, or to carry the Chamberlain's key, an office that has been lavished on all sorts of so-called gentlemen, I suppressed it, as a short way out of the difficulty. I thus made myself an intimate and actual State Councillor, without the intimacy or actuality.

In 1809, Mme. de Staël, in exile from France, and bringing her son to Vienna to learn German, introduced herself to Charles Joseph de Ligne, saying: "Prince, I am bringing my son to the school of genius." To which he gallantly replied: "He has been in it from birth, madame."

After this beginning they soon became cordial friends, until the time when the Baroness undertook to publish certain *Select Passages* of the Prince's *Miscellanies*. Select passages! With Mme. de Staël fluently expurgating the text and polishing the phrases. Ligne made no secret of his annoyance. He wrote to Caroline Murray, a Belgian writer:

Mme. Necker would disgust one with writing one's

thoughts, as, with her patching-up of the thoughts of others, which she does not understand, she destroys one's desire to read. You are afraid all the time of getting entangled.

Mme. de Staël herself admits, in a letter to the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, the liberties she took: "Has the Duke received the Prince de Ligne, arranged by me?' Nevertheless, from one point of view the author of *Corinne* rendered a great service to the literary fame of our hero; for few people would have had the courage to go through the thirty-four volumes of the *Miscellanies* to separate for themselves the precious flowers from the weeds. Hence Mme. de Staël's anthology, the first to be published, had a great interest for contemporaries.

I should like to show my readers the portrait of Anna Lullin de Chateauvieux, wife of Jean Gabriel Eynard; and this would help them to realize, better than any words of mine, the grace and goodness with which this charming woman delighted Ligne a few months before he died. Her ingenuous smile, large inquiring eyes, and straying curls turned the head of the aged noble once more.

Mme. Eynard, who had accompanied her husband to Vienna, as he was secretary of Pictet de Rochemont, envoy of the Republic of Geneva at the Vienna Congress, was introduced by Ligne to the Austrian aristocracy. It is to

her, to the diary in which she entered all the facts, great and small, of her life, that we owe this touching tribute to the Prince:

To-day, which ought to be a day of mourning in Vienna, was as busy and worldly as usual. What reflections that provokes on the thoughtlessness of society! Its finest ornament, he who loved it, who was the soul of it, left it for ever this morning. He takes with him the regret of all; but not a moment of solitude, not a minute of serious thought, has been wrested from the hours of pleasure to give to the memory of the Prince de Ligne.

The Court performance at the theatre has, it is true, been postponed, from a sense of propriety. Every other social function went on, and nothing was spoken of but the loss they had suffered. Some boasted that they had been intimate with him; and the very man who professed to have been his dearest friend, and the most sincere mourner, was speaking in the midst of a crowd that had come to enjoy itself.

I also was in society, but quite innocently, because I knew not of his death. I learned it in the midst of a brilliant circle, and from that moment I knew not what to do. I felt out of place, though there were in the same gathering people who had long been friends of his. This, however, did not excuse me in my own eyes, and I went away early, thinking within myself how cruel it is, when one has been a prominent man, when one has done much, and been exalted to the clouds, to be mourned in this fashion. His family is said to be in despair. I believe it. If one is not mourned thus by one's own, where shall we look for it, for friends have nothing but words?

The Prince de Ligne ought to be mourned, not by the Viennese only, but by foreigners, because he was charming to them. His house was the unpretentious

centre of the best society. His salon was horrible, his staircase a ladder, his chairs straw-seated; but one went to see the Prince de Ligne and forgot all that. There he was, surrounded by his charming daughters. His aged wife, sitting in an arm-chair, made up in venerableness for the Prince, who was rather too much a man of the world for his age. The conversation was animated. Everyone spoke without thought of self. A good fire, crackling in a frightful fire-place, cheered everybody, as they had not that comfort in their own homes. There was an unceremonious supper, which you ate or left, as you pleased, served with the utmost simplicity. You were received most graciously, and, as you went out, it was: 'Come again soon.'

It is natural that I should be so pleased with the house, for I was spoiled there. The Prince was as kind to me as any man could be. Each tried to outdo the other in flattering me. It was so nice there that one was more amiable there than anywhere else.

We have now learned that this good Prince, who said he was so poor, deprived himself of half his income to give to the poor. How vexed I am that I did not know that when he was alive! I would have loved him still more.

So the winter of 1814 was fatal to Field-Marshal Prince Charles Joseph de Ligne. He took no care of himself. In October he was seen "without an overcoat, his coat unbuttoned, with thin shoes and silk stockings, his hat under his arm." In December he left the room, during a ball, several times to escort ladies to their carriages. It was very cold, and Ligne caught a chill. There was fever the next night, breaking out in the form of a pronounced erysipelas on

the neck. Princesse de Clary, Countess Palfy and Baroness Spiegel, his daughters, hastened to his bed. The anguish suddenly set in. Dr. Malfaty came several times next day, but would say nothing. There was some delirium, in which the Prince was building a chimerical monument.

Death came on apace. A little later the Prince said to his daughters, who knelt beside the bed: "What are you doing, children? Do you take me for a relic? Wait a little; I am not yet a saint." It was the last word of the wit. Soothed by some medicine, he awoke almost gay; but the fever set in again in the evening. At midnight he sat up, and cried: "Advance! Long live Maria Theresa." It was the last word of the soldier. Ligne died. It was December 13, 1814.

Two hours before he died the Prince had said, in a low voice: "I always admired the end of Petronius, who died to the sound of music and good poetry. Well, I am more fortunate. I die surrounded by my friends, and in the arms of those I love. I may not be strong enough to live longer, but I am strong enough to love you." Those were the brave man's last words.

QUO RESCUMQUE CADUNT
SEMPER STAT LINEA RECTA

(Motto of the Ligne family.)

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